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# The History and Romance of Crime

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE PRESENT DAY



THE GROLIER SOCIETY  
LONDON









## *Alexander VI and Machiavelli*

*From the painting by Francesco Iacovacci  
In the National Gallery, Rome*

The distinguished author Machiavelli holding conversation with Pope Alexander VI, in whose reign a contemporary writer says: "There is nothing so wicked or so criminal as not to be done publicly at Rome." Machiavelli was imprisoned and put to the torture in 1513, but was released and seems to have escaped the fate of many. Alexander VI died by poison, which he and his son Cesare Borgia had prepared for a cardinal, who was invited to dine with them in their garden.

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# Italian Prisons

ST. ANGELO—THE PIOMBI—THE VICARIA  
PRISONS OF THE ROMAN INQUISITION

*by*

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## INTRODUCTION

THE Tomb of Hadrian, or Castle of St. Angelo, as it has been called since the famous vision of Gregory the Great, is a familiar object to every stranger in Rome. It stands above the yellow Tiber facing the ancient Aelian Bridge, now called also the Bridge of St. Angelo on the main road to St. Peter's and the Vatican. It is connected with the latter by a subterranean passage built by Pope Alexander VI in 1500, and used by his successors as a path of retreat to the fortress in times of internal revolt or foreign attack. The great fortress prison, although dismantled of the marble that once covered its stones, is still a most imposing edifice and is second to none in the world in its historic memories, replete with strange and terrible interest. It is an epitome of Roman history, closely associated from the beginning of the Christian era down to the fall of the temporal power of the Popes, with the storms and struggles that have rent the Eternal City. Any account of Italian prisons must thus centre about this grim old relic of the Cæsars, — "this massive mausoleum, by turns a tomb, a fortress, a prison and a palace, a chapel and a treasure-

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house; now threatening the liberty of Rome, now defending its very existence; now the refuge of the Republic, now the hiding place of the Popes; through war and peace, from the Imperial days on through the Gothic and Mediæval epochs, down to the present hour never ceasing to be a living part of the history of Rome." Since 1890 it has been used as barracks for a branch of the Italian army, but visitors may yet see the apartments of the Popes and those horrible dungeons into which, in former days, no ray of light could penetrate. Until the French occupation of Rome, when doors were cut into them, they were entered through holes in the vaulted ceiling. Through these the wretched prisoners were let down into the fetid depths of these "sepulchres without the peace of the dead." In them languished Benvenuto Cellini, the wizard Cagliostro, beautiful, unhappy Beatrice Cenci, and many others famous in song and story.

The records of this fortress-prison are largely the history of early and mediæval Rome, and in the severity of its punishments and the ruthless cruelty of its methods it stands as the type "writ large" of the prisons of Italy, for which, as it were, it set the pace.

For centuries before its unification under Victor Emanuel I, Italy had been split into many small, independent, and ever-warring states, each with its own penal code and methods of punishment, but each emulating the other in the arbitrariness of its



methods and the diabolical cruelty of its punishments. When the prisons were taken over by the present government, they were unspeakably foul and ill-ventilated, and frightfully overcrowded. When Mr. Gladstone, moved by the rumours of their condition at the time of the imprisonment of the Neapolitan patriots, Paerio and Settembrini, penetrated into them in disguise, "he found the prisoners, men of stainless life, ex-cabinet ministers, authors, barristers, chained to common criminals and living in hideous degradation." In St. Angelo, subterranean cells, which could be entered only by crawling on all fours, often held thrice the number for which they were destined. Here were huddled the innocent and the guilty, the untried and convicted. At this time ordinary prisoners were often employed beyond the gaol, compelled to drag their chains as they worked in the streets or private houses. Within, they were hired out to contractors who were fined for every idle man. Discipline was maintained by confinement in a black hole, or by resort to starvation, irons or the stick. Many such instruments may still be seen by the visitor to St. Angelo. In the Roman prison food was very scarce, and to provide it and otherwise alleviate the sufferings of the wretched inmates, was the special vocation of many pious confraternities, of which some account is given in these pages.

In marked contrast was the treatment of clerical offenders. For them a special building, beautifully

located at Carneto, was set apart. Here the inmates were lodged in separate cells, were allowed to raise flowers in the garden, and, if so disposed, to pass their days together.

In Mr. Gladstone's denunciation of the Neapolitan prisons he referred to them as "a self-governed community in which the real authority was vested in the worst members," — those, in fact, who had been guilty of the most atrocious crimes. At that time, as at the present, these prisons were ruled by that powerful associated body of evil-doers, the "Camorra," that hideous offspring of the union of Bourbon tyranny with Neapolitan want and depravity, which continues to terrorise the lower classes of southern Italy. The Mafia is of Sicilian origin and much older than the Camorra. A chapter is devoted to these great criminal societies.

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# ITALIAN PRISONS

## CHAPTER I

### THE CASTLE OF ST. ANGELO

St. Angelo a living part of the history of Rome—Its origin and uses—Preceded in date by the Mamertine Prison—Mausoleum of Hadrian—Other ancient monuments in Rome—Description of mausoleum—Hadrian, his life and work—Antinous—Funeral procession—Antoninus Pius—Marcus Aurelius—Severus—The mausoleum as a fortress—Struggles with the Barbarians.

A PRISON of great antiquity still exists in Rome and claims precedence in date over St. Angelo. This is the Mamertine Prison, situated just below the Capitol and on the way to the Forum, in which by common tradition St. Peter was confined A. D. 62. The pillar to which he is said to have been chained is still on view, and the well of water is shown which sprang up miraculously for use in the baptism of the converted gaoler and St. Peter's forty-seven fellow prisoners. It is an appalling place even to-day when the light of heaven creeps down the stairs leading to its subterranean recesses. These were two cellars, one below the other, and access to them was only gained through a small aperture in the

roof of the upper cellar, while a similar hole in the floor led down into the cell underneath; neither had any staircase. The upper prison was twenty-seven feet long by twenty wide, the lower, elliptical in shape, was twenty feet long by ten feet wide; the height of the former was fourteen feet and of the latter seven feet. They were used originally as state prisons and lodged only persons of distinction, Jugurtha being among the number. We read in Sallust: "In the prison called Tullian when you have gone a little way down, a place on the left is found sunk twenty feet; it is surrounded by walls on all sides, and above is a room vaulted with stone, but from uncleanliness, darkness and a foul smell the appearance of it is disgusting and terrific." Livy tells us that this prison was built by Ancus Martius, and like the Cloacae, of large uncemented stones; it was also called "Robur" and seems to be identical with the *carcer lautumiarum* or the "prison of the stone quarries," suggesting that after the excavation the empty space was utilised for the construction of a prison. The quarries at Syracuse were used for the same purpose. The Mamertine prison was constantly used for the confinement of the early Christian martyrs. A chapel was eventually built above it, consecrated to St. Peter.

The site occupied by the castle of St. Angelo is identical with that of the tomb, mausoleum or mole erected by the Emperor Hadrian, A. D. 135, for himself and his family. Powerful rulers from the earli-



est ages have been greatly concerned to raise fitting receptacles for their ashes. The famous pyramids of Egypt are perhaps the most striking illustration of this vanity, and the influence was felt in other countries, especially in Rome. Many fine monuments survive, some in still recognisable ruins, some in ever green memory, perpetuating this desire. We may instance the tomb of Caius Cestius — the only specimen of a pyramid existing in Rome — which still stands near the Porta San Paolo, partly within the walls, partly without, for the Emperor Aurelian ran his wall exactly across it. It is 125 feet high, built of brick cased in white marble, now become black with age; and its chief modern interest is that the English cemetery is close at hand, the last resting place of the poets Shelley and Keats. The Cestian family was distinguished, but nothing very positive is known of this Caius except that he held office as praetor of the people in the seventh century B. C.

Another tomb is that of Bibulus, who was also a tribune. It is still extant and to be found at the foot of the Capitoline Bridge. The tomb of Cecilia Metella is a very beautiful and well preserved monument of circular form, standing on the Appian Way near the Circus of Caracalla; she was a daughter of the Q. C. Metellus who conquered Crete, and was probably wife to Crassus who fell in the Parthian war. The most notable of all was the mausoleum of Augustus, once a magnificent structure, a small

portion of which still remains, much built in, and hidden away in the Via Rippeta. It was originally of circular form crowned with a dome and surmounted with a statue of Augustus. Strabo records that "it was particularly worth noticing, built upon immense foundations of white marble and covered with evergreens." It is probable that the Emperor Hadrian desired to imitate and rival Augustus in the erection of the mausoleum to himself. He was inspired also, it is believed, by his admiration of the magnificent monument erected by Artemisia to her brother and husband Mausolus, who originated the word mausoleum, and was king of Caria 377 B. C. This splendid tomb erected at Halicarnassus was the outcome of her inconsolable grief and ardent affection, which was further displayed by her drinking his ashes dissolved in fluid. This famous monument was counted one of the seven wonders of the world. The statue of Mausolus may be seen to-day among the art treasures preserved in the British Museum.

Hadrian's work was undertaken A. D. 135 but he did not live to complete it, and it was finished by his successor, Antoninus Pius. The first detailed description of the mausoleum is to be found in the history of the Gothic wars written by Procopius in the sixth century. "Beyond the Aurelian Gate," he says, "a stone's throw from the walls is the tomb of Hadrian, a wonderful and remarkable work, built of large blocks of Parian marble, superposed and

closely fitted together without cement or clamps to bind them. The four sides are equal, each about a stone's throw in length, and the height is greater than the walls of the city. On the summit are admirable statues of men and horses of the same material, and as this tomb formed a defence to the city thrown out beyond the walls, it was joined to them by the ancients (the Roman emperors) by two arms built out to it, so that it seemed to rise out of them like a lofty turret."

To this brief description John of Antioch, the author of a book of antiquities in the eighth century, adds the fact that the mausoleum was surmounted by a statue of Hadrian in a car drawn by four horses and so large that a full grown man might pass through one of the horses' eyes. And yet he says, that in consequence of the great height of the mausoleum, the horses as well as the statue of Hadrian, seen from below, have the effect of being quite small. This would seem to indicate that the horses were hollow, and if so, they must have been cast in bronze and not made of marble as stated by Procopius, and as were those on the tomb of Mausolus.

Hadrian's mausoleum was constructed of brickwork and square blocks of peperino-stone laid with such care and exactness that lightning, battles and earthquakes have failed to shake it from its perfect solidity. Inside and outside it was faced with courses of Parian marble. The basement was a

square of about 340 feet each way and about 75 feet high. Above this rose a circular tower of some 235 feet in diameter and 140 in height, divided into two or three stories and ornamented with columns. Between these columns were statues executed by the ablest artists of the period; and as Hadrian was devoted to the fine arts and especially to that of sculpture, there can be little doubt that the statues and bas-reliefs which adorned this splendid structure were among the noblest works in Rome. Above the circular tower was a dome or a curvilinear roof which must have risen to the height of some 300 feet. This was probably crowned by the colossal group, above mentioned, representing Hadrian in a chariot drawn by four horses, after the plan of the tomb of Mausolus, its Grecian prototype. Rich friezes girdled it around, some storied with figures, some architectural with heads of oxen and festoons of flowers. On each of the four sides of the square basement was a massive door of gilt bronze and at each of these doors were four horses also of gilt bronze. Between the doors on the basement were large tablets, on which were inscribed the names and titles of the emperors who were buried within it.

The walls were of immense thickness; not filled up in the centre with rubbish, but throughout of the most solid workmanship, as may be seen by a breach made for temporary purposes long after it was built. In the centre were two chambers in the shape of a

Greek cross, one above the other, each cased in rich Paconazetto marble and illuminated by two openings which pierced the thickness of the giant walls. Here the ashes of the emperors were deposited, the post assigned to the porphyry sarcophagus of Hadrian being under the large arch on the southern side. Some of the art treasures bestowed upon the mausoleum by its founder are still to be traced. The colossal busts of Hadrian now in the Vatican are supposed to have come from it, and the porphyry basin which forms the baptismal font at St. Peter's. None of the many other admirable sculptures are in existence with the exception of the Barberini Faun in the museum of Munich.

A word or two about Hadrian and his immediate successors who found sepulture in his mausoleum. The emperor himself was not the first to be laid to rest in his gorgeous tomb. He was preceded by Ælius Verus, whose original name had been L. Ceionius Commodus, and whom he had adopted as son and heir, a gay and voluptuous nobleman whose uncommon good looks recommended him to the Emperor Hadrian, but who was sickly and in failing health. Ælius Verus at his death left an only son Lucius, who later was adopted by Antoninus Pius, and later still shared the imperial purple with the famous philosopher-emperor, Marcus Aurelius.

Hadrian was a man of brilliant parts, a far-seeing and astute statesman, a good soldier, who yet pre-

ferred peace to war. He was of restless disposition and a confirmed wanderer, ever on the move through his wide empire, the greater part of which he perambulated, literally, on foot. He visited Britain, and the great wall between the Solway Firth and the Tyne was his work. He lingered long at Athens for he was a devoted lover of art, a munificent patron who constantly acquired paintings and sculptures at home and abroad. "Under his reign," as Gibbon tells us, "the empire flourished in peace and prosperity. He encouraged the arts, reformed the laws, asserted military discipline and visited all his provinces in person." There were features in his private life, however, repugnant to commonly accepted social ethics, and his deification of his favourite Antinous must ever dishonour his name.

Yet Antinous sacrificed his life voluntarily to save his master. The augurs had told Hadrian that his destiny was inscribed on the entrails of a youth who was very dear to him, upon which Antinous offered to solve the mystery and drowned himself in the Nile. Hadrian built a city on the spot, named it after his favourite and ordered that he should receive divine honours throughout the empire. Towards the end of his life Hadrian suffered tortures from a mortal malady, and in the paroxysms of pain was addicted to outbursts of savage cruelty. Weary of life, he begged a gladiator to end it, but in vain. At last he succumbed

to dropsy at the age of seventy-two, according to one account, in the arms of his successor, Antoninus Pius. Some say that his body was burned and afterward buried at Pozzuoli; others that his ashes were conveyed to Rome for interment in the family vault.

The striking picture which W. W. Story has drawn of the funeral ceremony, in his "Castle of St. Angelo," deserves quotation. "The magnificent Ælian Bridge (Hadrian's work), resting on massive arches and adorned with statues, formed the splendid stone avenue by which the mausoleum was approached. . . . Facing the bridge was one of the great golden gates, which swinging open let through the train into a long dark sloping corridor arched above, cased in marble at the sides and paved in black and white mosaic. Over this gentle rise the train passed in, its torches flaring, its black robed *præficiae* chanting the dirge of the dead and its wailing trumpets echoing and pealing down the hollow vaulted tunnel. Next came the *mimes* declaiming solemn passages from the tragic poets and followed by waxen figures borne aloft representing ancestors of the dead emperor and clad in the robes they had worn in life. Behind them streamed great standards blazoned with the records of the emperor's deeds and triumphs. Last came the funeral couch of ivory draped with Attalic vestments embroidered with gold, over which a black veil was cast. It was borne on the shoulders of his nearest relatives and

friends, and followed by the crowd of slaves made free by his will, and wearing the *pilleus*<sup>1</sup> in token of the fact. Over the bridge they slowly passed, in at the golden gate and up the hollow sounding corridor till, after making the complete interior circuit of the walls, they entered the vast cavernous chamber where they laid at last the ashes of him who, living, had ruled the world."

The third occupant of the imperial tomb was Antoninus Pius, who had been named by Hadrian as his successor after the disappointing death of Ælius Verus. He had been deeply desirous to find some man of exalted merit to ascend the Roman throne, and his choice fell upon a senator of irreproachable character and blameless life, Titus Antoninus Pius, the elder of the two Antonines, under whom the empire enjoyed good government for forty-two years. As a condition of this appointment Antoninus Pius was ordered to associate with himself a youth of seventeen in whom Hadrian had discovered marked promise of noble virtues and profound ability. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, the youth in question, more than fulfilled the high expectations he had thus raised. As he grew in years, he steadily improved his natural qualifications and cultivated his mental gifts by unremitting study and the earnest adoption of the highest philosophical principles. "The united reigns of the two Antonines,"

<sup>1</sup> The *pilleus* was a close fitting felt cap worn by freed men as a mark of their enfranchisement.



says Gibbon, "are probably the only periods of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government." Antoninus Pius "has been justly denominated a second Numa. The same love of religion, justice and peace was the distinguishing characteristic of both princes. But the situation of the latter opened a much larger field for the exercise of these virtues. Numa could only prevent a few neighbouring villages from plundering each other's harvests; Antoninus diffused order and tranquillity over the greater part of the earth. . . . In private life he was an amiable as well as a good man. The native simplicity of his virtue was a stranger to vanity and affectation. He enjoyed with moderation the conveniences of his fortune and the innocent pleasures of society; he was fond of the theatre and not insensible to the charms of the fair sex, and the benevolence of his soul displayed itself in a cheerful serenity of temper."

The manner of his death was of a piece with his life. He had fallen ill at his villa and "after ordering the golden statue of fortune to be transferred to his successor, he gave the countersign 'Equanimity' to the tribune of his guard, turned over as to sleep and passed calmly out of life at the ripe age of seventy-four — a cheerful, dignified man, the calm and noble philosopher, the generous and clement ruler, who said to himself '*Malle se unum civem servare quam mille hostes occidere.*' 'I had

rather save one citizen than kill a thousand enemies.' ”

At the death of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius took Lucius Verus into partnership with him as emperor. This Lucius Verus was the son of the Ælius Verus already mentioned, who died prematurely. Lucius married Lucilla, the eldest daughter of Antoninus Pius. He was a vicious, unworthy creature, sunk in dissipation and self-indulgence, but he possessed one cardinal virtue, that of dutiful reverence for his wiser colleague, to whom he willingly abandoned the onerous cares of ruling. He was wholly unlike his colleague, being entirely given over to luxury and ease, averse to strenuous labour, a fop and voluptuary; he dressed extravagantly, sprinkled his hair with gold dust and took his mid-day siesta on a couch stuffed with rose leaves, with lilies strewn over him. He prefigured that notorious sybarite Heliogabalus, who liberally rewarded the inventor of a new sauce, and if it failed to please him, ordered its author to eat nothing else until he had discovered another more agreeable to the imperial palate. The highest aim of Lucius Verus seemed to be the concoction of a pasty which should become a favourite dish at the imperial table. Nevertheless, when occasion arose he acquitted himself well as a soldier, showing courage and skill as a leader in the field. Marcus Aurelius, to wean him from his consuming passion for debauchery, employed him at the head of the Pannonian legions

at a distance from Rome, but after the few first successes, his vicious cravings regained their ascendancy, and this although Marcus Aurelius surrounded him with wise senators and competent comrades. Lucius Verus preferred to leave the conduct of operations to his generals. While they won victories in the East, he went slowly through Greece and Lesser Asia dancing and feasting and revelling at Corinth, Athens, and the various pleasure-loving cities he found by the way. He spent his summers at Daphne and his winters at Laodicea. The dissolute life he lived in Syria was checked but not cured by his marriage with Lucilla, who came to Ephesus to meet him: he still loved his old debauched life; passed whole nights at the gaming table or in rambling through the streets disguised, frequenting the lowest haunts or the worst quarters. He was passionately devoted to the sports of the circus and was a noted chariot driver. An ardent worshipper of horses, he was fond of feeding a favourite horse with raisins and nuts. He took the horse everywhere with him, gorgeously bedecked with purple trappings, until its death, when he buried it with great solemnity in the Vatican and raised a golden statue to its memory. When he returned from the East he was accompanied by a train of actors, musicians and buffoons, and shared a great triumph and all its attendant honours, to which he had no claim, with his brother emperor. He brought also from the East the pestilence we

now know as the plague, which ravaged Rome and greatly weakened the Roman army. Lucius Verus died suddenly of apoplexy on his return from a campaign against the Marcomanni which had been far from successful. Beyond doubt he paid the last penalty for his excesses which had become more and more shameless and ungovernable. Marcus Aurelius strongly disapproved of his conduct but did not go beyond silent reproof; he must be quite exonerated from the charge that was laid against Lucilla, who was said to have poisoned her worthless husband from shame at his misconduct, not unmixed with jealousy of Faustina, the base wife of Marcus Aurelius, whose amours were barefaced and innumerable. Lucius Verus died at Altinum in Venetia, but his ashes were brought to Rome for interment in the mausoleum of Hadrian.

Marcus Aurelius afterwards reigned alone, and with prudent energy faced successfully many serious trials, — insurrections in distant provinces, pestilence at home, inundations and earthquakes which devastated large sections of the Imperial City and ruined the great granaries on which depended the food supply of the teeming population. Fierce, intractable enemies threatened the empire closely and persistently throughout his life. Although by predilection a man of peace, he was a resolute soldier who fought many strenuous campaigns and brought many savage races into absolute submission. He could act with the sternest severity, but

he showed extraordinary magnanimity to one inferior lieutenant, and treated rebellious provinces with extreme gentleness. He was so mild and merciful that under no provocation did he lose his temper, and his humanity showed itself in his concern for his fellow creatures; even for the gladiators whom he would not allow to practise fencing with sharp swords. His labours were incessant; his campaigns most arduous. For eight successive winters he warred upon the frozen banks of the Danube, and seriously injured his originally weak constitution by the hardships and unending anxieties he endured.

With all his great achievements and the conspicuous services he rendered to his country, his fame rests mainly on that delightful book of meditations embodying his serene philosophy which is still read and admired by the whole world. This "noblest, wisest, purest, most virtuous and self-denying gentleman that ever in any age wore the imperial robes," died at Vienna A. D. 180, after a reign of twenty years. He met death quietly and with dignity, not as a calamity but as a blessing: "Turn me to the rising sun for I am setting," he said to his attendants, and covering his head he composed himself for sleep. No man bore crosses with more fortitude and no man was more sorely tried.

Faustina, the wife of Marcus Aurelius, lives in history as the most abandoned of her sex, and his son, Commodus, although educated with the utmost

solicitude, was one of the most glaring instances of wasted effort. "The monstrous vices of the son," says Gibbon, "have cast a shade on the purity of the father's virtues." It has been said that he sacrificed the happiness of millions to a fond partiality for a worthless boy, when he chose a successor in his own family rather than in the republic. Nothing, however, was neglected by the anxious father, and by the men of virtue and learning whom he summoned to his assistance, to expand the narrow mind of young Commodus, to correct his growing vices and to render him worthy of the throne for which he was designed. But the power of instruction is seldom of much efficacy except in those happy dispositions where it is almost superfluous. The distasteful lesson of a grave philosopher was, in a moment, obliterated by the whisper of a profligate favourite, and Marcus himself blasted the fruits of this laboured education by admitting his son at the age of fourteen or fifteen to a full participation of the imperial powers. Yet Commodus was not as he has been represented, a tiger, born with an insatiate thirst for human blood and capable from his infancy of the most inhuman actions. "Nature had formed him of a weak rather than a wicked disposition. His simplicity and timidity rendered him the slave of his attendants, who gradually corrupted his mind. His cruelty, which at first obeyed the dictates of others, degenerated into habit and at length became the ruling

passion of his soul." He was wasteful and weakly extravagant, prodigal in his expenditure on his personal amusements, especially in gladiatorial exhibitions in which he himself engaged. He liked to pose as the Roman Hercules, and entered the arena to slay ostriches and panthers, the camel, leopard, elephant and the rhinoceros; he fought hundreds of times as a *retiarius* in combat with a *secutor* and stooped to receive a salary from the common fund for the gladiators in proof of his pre-eminence. He was slavishly fond of singing, dancing and playing the buffoon; he was a glutton and profligate who wallowed in the most sensuous abominations, and after the life of this monster and madman had been threatened by many plots, he was at last poisoned in his own palace by Marcia, his mistress, who, finding the drug too slow in action, caused him to be strangled by one of his gladiators. His body was refused burial by the Senate and thrown into the Tiber, but the Emperor Pertinax recovered it and had it secretly conveyed to the mausoleum. The memory of Commodus was branded with eternal infamy; it was ordered that his honours should be reversed; his titles erased from the public monuments; his statues thrown down; his body dragged with a hook into the stripping room of the gladiators and exposed to public contumacy.

The last occasion on which the tomb was used was for the interment of the Emperor Septimus

Severus A. D. 211, an able, vigorous and just ruler who fought his way to the throne against two competitors; all three of them were generals of armies which supported their pretensions. Severus was at the head of the Pannonian legions, and occupied the country between the Danube and the Adriatic. He was nearest to Rome, so that, by using almost incredible expedition, he made successful head against his competitors, and was the first to advance and seize the city. He secured his position by many acts of cruelty, but when once safe, governed with justice and showed himself a man of character. He took Marcus Aurelius for his model, and was devoted to philosophy and study, but not averse to war. His last campaign was in Britain, and he undertook it in the vain hope of putting an end to the fierce quarrels existing between his two sons, Caracalla and Geta, who hated each other almost from birth. They were both poor commonplace creatures, devoid of talent and implacably jealous of each other, although their father treated them with studied impartiality and associated both with him on the throne so that Rome had three emperors at one and the same time. He carried both sons with him into Britain, where at an advanced age and suffering acutely from gout, he laid himself out for the complete conquest of the islands, even to their most northern extremities, but death overtook him at York. His remains were taken back to Rome to be honoured with a magnificent



funeral and his ashes were laid in Hadrian's tomb.

With the burial of Septimus Severus ended the first purpose which this great monument was intended to serve. When next it appears in authentic writings, it is in a military character, as part and parcel of the defences of Rome. Troublous times were at hand for the Eternal City and its very existence was threatened by the rising tide of more stalwart peoples. Hordes of barbarians from northern and central Europe were about to overflow the remote barriers and far flung frontiers of the empire; Goths, Visigoths, Franks, Lombards and Huns swept south in an irrepressible stream of invasion. The mausoleum became a fortress and was incorporated in the circumvallation given to the city by Aurelian in 271 A. D., when he enclosed the Campus Martius within its limits and the left bank of the Tiber. The strength and commanding position of the mausoleum constituted it a place of great importance, a citadel and central point in the city walls. It was to play a great part now in the many fierce struggles for the possession of Rome. By this time the separation had taken place between East and West and Byzantium had become the seat of empire in the East, while in the West the court was fixed at Milan. Rome, deserted and neglected, saw ruin impending, and only escaped destruction at the hands of the barbarians by the victories of Stilicho, a distinguished general

of the Western emperor, Theodosius. Honorius, his son, made a triumphal entry into Rome and sought to revive its splendours; but the barbarian menace drove him to strengthen the fortifications.

Ere long the Goths under Alaric advanced in great force to besiege the city. After three distinct and determined attacks the Goths at length captured and sacked it, but voluntarily withdrew with the spoils of war. The fall of Rome horrified the whole world and the shock was repeated when the Hun, Attila, the "scourge of God," descended upon it in all his brutal fury. He retreated, it was said, impelled by superstitious terrors. Rome yielded, however, to Genseric, the wild and terrible king of the African Vandals, who pillaged the defenceless city for fourteen days, making frightful havoc and sweeping away all that the Goths had spared.

The damage inflicted in these devastating attacks was incalculable. Rome was nearly depopulated; within forty-five years she lost through slaughter, flight and slavery some 150,000 inhabitants. Many ancient families entirely disappeared, others only survived to lead a miserable existence, falling, like the deserted temples, rapidly into decay. Huge palaces stood forsaken and empty, and the people stalked like spectres through the silent and nearly deserted streets of the desolate city. Rome recovered slowly, but the Western Empire was surely dying; feeble emperors reigned like shadows, and at length the throne fell to an adventurous barbarian

soldier, Odoacer, a king of mercenaries, who ruled wisely and gave Rome thirteen years of tranquillity and peaceful progress. He was nevertheless a usurper, a foreign soldier hated and feared by the people, to be set aside as soon as a stronger man appeared. This was Theodoric, leader of the warlike Austro-Goths, a heroic people who had assimilated the civilising processes of East and West.

Theodoric invaded Italy and made himself king; but he did not interfere with existing institutions and ere long won the respect, if not the affection, of the Roman people. He was not a Christian but he esteemed the Catholic faith; he knelt at the great basilica of St. Peter, approaching it in a triumphal procession across Hadrian's bridge. He fed the populace with free food, amused them with games and spectacles in the Amphitheatre and Circus Maximus, and was deeply anxious to restore and care for the ancient monuments and buildings of the city. He was the noblest barbarian that ever ruled Italy, and his memory still lingers in the great cities he founded or restored. He endowed the capital with many great works, such as the restoration of the Appian Way and the drainage of the Pontine marshes. It is sufficient for my purpose to record that he made the mausoleum of Hadrian the model for his own tomb, which he erected at Ravenna and was at great pains to strengthen. The Roman castle was known for centuries as the house or prison of Theodoric, owing the second

title no doubt to the security its walls afforded. Rome was undoubtedly a strong place of arms when the Goths under Vitiges, after the death of Theodoric, again attacked it. They were met and repelled by Belisarius, the great general appointed by the emperor Justinian, who had already won fame in Persian wars and who made very strenuous preparations to meet the attack, repairing the walls of Rome, which in spite of Theodoric's restorations were still damaged and in parts ruinous. He added trenches and provided flank defence by a projecting guard house; above all, he filled the public granaries and fully victualled the place.

Vitiges when he arrived saw that he could not take the city by a *coup de main* and must make a regular siege. The skill of the Goths, accustomed to fight in the open field, was of little avail in laying siege to a city, and Vitiges, overlooking this fact, staked his entire kingdom against the walls of Rome, with the result that his heroic people here found their overthrow. The Goths formed six entrenched camps before these defences, all on the left side of the river; a seventh they erected on the right bank of the Tiber on the Neronian Field, or the plain which stretches under Monte Mario from the Vatican Hill as far as the Milvian bridge. They thus not only protected the bridge itself but at the same time threatened the bridge of Hadrian and the entrance to the city through the inner gate of Aurelian. This gate, already named St. Peter's, stood

outside the bridge of Hadrian and beyond the wall which, from the Porta Flaminia on the inner side of the river, surrounded the field of Mars. Vitiges at length was ready to deliver a decisive assault. Wooden towers sufficiently high to overlook the defences, were set on strong wheels; projecting battering rams of iron were hung by chains to be thrust against the walls, each manned by fifty men, and long scaling ladders were constructed to be attached to the battlements. To these preparations (at the rude simplicity of which modern military science may smile) Belisarius opposed measures all his own. He set upon the walls skilfully contrived catapults or balistae, and great stone slings (*onagri*) called "wild asses" were constructed to throw a bolt with such force as to pin a mail-clad man fast to a tree. The gates were themselves defended with so-called "wolves" or drawbridges fashioned out of heavy beams and furnished with iron pins which were to be released at a given moment to fall on the assailants with overwhelming force.

Belisarius had entrusted the guard of the mausoleum to his most valued lieutenant, Constantinus, ordering him also to cover the neighbouring walls of the city, which (perhaps on the left of the Aurelian Gate) remained undefended save by small outposts, the river in itself affording some protection. Meanwhile the Goths attempted to cross the Tiber in boats and Constantinus, leaving the more numer-

ous forces in the Aurelian Gate and at the mausoleum as garrison, was forced to appear in person on the menaced spot. The Goths next advanced against the mausoleum. Should they be able to take this main work, they might hope to make themselves masters of the bridge and gate. They brought no machines, nothing but scaling ladders which they covered with their broad shields. A portico or covered colonnade led to the Vatican basilica from the neighbourhood of the tomb, and in this colonnade the approaching party sheltered themselves from the missiles rained down by the men stationed in the mausoleum. They crept along the narrow streets which surrounded the ruined circus of Hadrian so cautiously that the besieged in the fortress were unable to use the catapults against them. Then dashing forward, they shot a cloud of arrows on the battlements of the tomb and leaned their scaling ladders against it. Pressing forward on all sides they had nearly surrounded and scaled the mausoleum when despair suggested to the defenders to make use, as projectiles, of the many statues with which it was decorated, and forthwith they hurled these statues down upon the Goths. The broken masterpieces, statues of emperors, gods and heroes, dropped in heavy fragments upon the devoted heads of the assailants who were routed utterly. This wild scene around the grave of an emperor — a conflict which recalls the mythic battles of the giants — ended the struggle by the Au-

relian Gate. His unsuccessful attack cost Vitiges the flower of his army.

The cost to Rome was terrible. The mausoleum was robbed for ever of her rich and incomparable artistic treasures. Priceless statues chiselled by the hands of Praxiteles and Polycletus, things of great beauty, divine creations of gods and heroes, had been used as mere projectiles with which to crush barbarian soldiers, and lay broken and blood-spattered beneath the rescued walls. They remained for long years where they fell, untouched, unearthed even, until in the seventeenth century Pope Urban VII, a Barberini, designing to improve the fortifications, deepened the ditch of the castle of St. Angelo, and the workmen discovered the famous statue of the Barberini Faun, now in the Glyptothek of Munich, where it still remains to prove how richly Hadrian had originally endowed and adorned his tomb.

History repeats itself, and ten years later Belisarius again defended Rome, now against the Goths under Totila, a masterful soldier who ascended the throne of Theodoric in 541 and renewed the war against the Byzantine Empire. He in turn besieged Rome and took it before it could be relieved. The great monuments were spared, although he had threatened to "turn the whole city into pasture for cattle," and he presently withdrew to return and reoccupy it a second and a third time. A brave soldier, Paulus, trained by Belisarius, had retired

into the mausoleum, which he held obstinately till reduced by famine, when he and his followers resolved to cut their way out, preferring death to surrender. Totila, however, offered them liberal terms if they would lay down their arms, and took them into his service. Then, having suffered severely himself in the fight, he entered the mausoleum, renewed its defences, stored his valuables within and sallied forth to face a new attack from the side of Ravenna. He was killed there and the tomb reverted to the Byzantine emperor.



## CHAPTER II

### THE LEONINE CITY

Growth of the Papacy — Popes gain territory and wealth — Gregory the Great — Boniface subsequently erected the chapel of St. Angelo — Rome the centre of conflict — The Leonine city and Leo IV — Castle frequently changed hands — Theodora and Marozia — Romans, maddened by misgovernment, entrust power to Crescentius — He is murdered — Three popes in Rome at the same time — Cencius — Castle much strengthened — Constant fighting for St. Angelo — Rome a prey to violence and crime — An epidemic of murder — Pope Alexander VI — A reign of terror — St. Angelo the scene of dire atrocities.

THE growth of the papacy steadily progressed as the empire declined and a long hierarchy of elected priests, beginning with St. Peter, occupied the episcopal chair from generation to generation. The first popes were the chiefs of a secret society of believers in a new cult which was to transform the world, and by their undying courage, willing martyrs to their faith, fought on till the Christian Church won an independent position as the spiritual leader of many peoples. Their pious converts continually endowed the Church with estates and treasures until the bishop of Rome became the largest landowner in the empire, and as early as the fifth century began to exercise material influence in the

city. While the city of Rome was impoverished, the Church grew more and more wealthy and the pope-bishop was far richer than the patriarch of Constantinople or Alexandria. The head of the Church in the West was a personage of much authority. His power was also extended to the East; he was backed by the Gothic kings of Italy and was by degrees recognised as the head of all Catholic Christendom. When the right of arbitration between clergy and laity was conceded to the pope, the political power of the papacy was finally established.

The election of Gregory, called the Great, at the end of the sixth century, came at a time when Rome was at her lowest ebb and opened the way to the consolidation of the temporal power of the popes. Gregory was a faithful steward of the revenues of the Church and his charities were unceasing to all classes, noble and pauper. The city was ravaged by famine and pestilence, but the latter was averted, says tradition, by the pious intercession of Gregory. The answer came to him from heaven as he headed a vast penitential procession. The whole populace joined, divided into seven groups according to age and class, each starting from their own quarter, abbots and monks and presbyters, nuns and widows, all bound for the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. As they marched through the ruins of the deserted city, they filled every echo with their solemn chants, while the pestilence still raged and deaths occurred

on the road. When passing the mausoleum of Hadrian, so the legend runs, the Pope looked up and saw the figure of the Archangel Michael, surrounded by the holy choir, with a flaming sword which he sheathed significantly as he alighted upon the pinnacle of the monument. Gregory interpreted the heavenly vision as a promise that the plague would cease, and indeed it presently began to abate. The incident was of special interest to the monument, for in gratitude, another pope, Boniface, probably the fourth, founded a chapel on the highest part of the mausoleum, which he dedicated to St. Michael, and it was afterward known as the chapel of St. Angelo, *inter nubcs*, or *inter caclos*. Of course the whole story is purely apocryphal and it is not mentioned by either of the pope's biographers. A bronze statue of St. Michael, erected by Pope Benedict XIV, about 1740, to this day hovers over the castle with outstretched wings.

The energy and pertinacity with which the early popes asserted their dignity and authority won the respect and devotion of the inhabitants of Rome, who relied upon them as their best protectors and defenders against the incursive barbarians. To this the papacy owed its strong position as the years went on, and its power to hold its own was more fully recognised by the nominal rulers of the people. Kings and emperors further endowed it with cities; Pepin gave it Rimini, Ravenna, and Urbino; Charlemagne, his son, was no less liberal;

the Normans enlarged the papal dominions, and before the end of the thirteenth century many free states acknowledged the papal authority.

As the centuries passed Rome was still a constant centre of conflict. Other invaders, both Franks and Vandals, had succeeded to the Goths. The Lombards, in the eighth century, besieged the castle of St. Angelo, but the city was preserved by the defences of Gregory the Great. Next, the Saracens attacked it but recoiled before the fortifications of Pope Leo IV, who created the Leonine city by enclosing the Vatican with a long wall, which began at St. Angelo and ran round St. Peter's, turned then to the left and completed the circuit by regaining the river below the gate of S. Spirito. The wall was forty feet high and nineteen feet thick, built with forty-one towers. It was pierced by three gates, a small one near St. Angelo, a larger one, the St. Peregrini, afterwards the Porta Vindaria, and a third at S. Spirito. The castle itself was reconstructed and strengthened and became the key to the whole line. It was closed at one end by an iron chain across the Tiber. When finished, the work was solemnly dedicated to heaven and the blessings of all the angels and apostles were invoked upon the new Rome, with a fervent prayer that it might be preserved ever pure and impregnable.

This Leonine city was to become the stronghold of the popes, a constant bone of contention, fought for by many masters and passing through many

hands. Its history has been stirring and eventful, and it would be interesting, were it possible, to record the many strange vicissitudes through which it passed, and to describe at length the notable persons, famous and infamous, who ruled it from time to time. A very cursory glance will suffice to indicate their leading characteristics, their rare virtues and vices; the good they did, and also the evil; their great ambition for the Church and themselves, which frequently led them to take desperate measures to gain their ends. Factions and dissensions were ever rife; rivals forever struggled for the supreme power, — such as the renegade pope, Stephen VI, who dared to produce the corpse of his deceased predecessor, Formosus, for trial on a trumped-up charge. The body was disinterred eight months after burial, dressed in pontifical robes and publicly arraigned for usurping the See of Rome. As there could be no defence, sentence was passed in default, the corpse was decapitated, the three fingers of the right hand used in consecration were cut off and the remains cast into the Tiber. Stephen himself was soon called to account after a brief reign of three months, was dethroned and cast into prison.

At this period the papal city fell under female rule, that of the mysterious, but undoubtedly notorious Theodora, who wielded the power gained by her beauty, wealth and cleverness, of absolute queen of Rome. Her husband was a certain Theophylactus, a consul, senator and patrician of Rome,

and she had two daughters, Marozia and Theodora, both of whom emulated their mother in wickedness. The chief interest attaching to these infamous women is that they made St. Angelo their chief residence and the principal theatre of their misdeeds. The elder daughter, Theodora, after the death of her husband, favoured a young ecclesiastic whom she brought to Rome; and eventually she procured his election as pope, bequeathing him the castle of St. Angelo at her death. Marozia hated him, drove him forth, became chatelaine and in her turn ruler of Rome. When Marozia lost her first husband she married a second, Guido, duke of Tuscany, associated with whom she was guilty of many crimes. She had two sons; one she made pope as John XI, and the other, Alberic, conspired against her. Being by this time a widow, she married a third husband, Hugo of Provence, king of Italy, and the nuptials were celebrated with great pomp in St. Angelo, in the vault where the porphyry sarcophagus of the Emperor Hadrian still stood. Alberic soon quarrelled with his stepfather and summoning the Roman people to his aid he upbraided them for submitting to the tyranny of a woman and stranger; he incited them to storm the castle, whence Hugo escaped by letting himself down by a rope from the walls and Marozia fled to a convent where she died.

The original purport of the castle was all but forgotten, and it was to serve for centuries as a

fortress, the very strongest part of Rome. It is described at this period by a contemporary writer as "of marvellous workmanship and strength, standing at the very entrance to Rome, commanding the splendid bridge over the Tiber, over which all must pass with the goodwill of the garrison if they desire to enter or leave the city." It was still an imposing edifice and retained most of its first marble panelling; the inscriptions to the buried emperors were still legible, although few of the fine statues and stately colonnades remained. Pope John XI, Marozia's son, administered the affairs of the Church with wisdom and justice, and he was succeeded by John XII, Alberic's son, who assumed the tiara at eighteen years of age and lived to earn the reputation of being one of the most infamous popes who had ever reigned. John entered into an alliance with Otho, Emperor of Germany, broke all his pledges and was attacked by Otho in the castle, which fell into the enemy's hands, while he himself escaped. Although absent he was put upon his trial before the council of cardinals and charged with a long list of terrible crimes. "You have been accused," said the indictment, "of homicide, perjury, sacrilege, incest: you have drunk to the health of the devil; when playing at dice you have implored the help of Jupiter, Venus and various demons." John refused to answer to these charges and threatened to excommunicate any one who should attempt to nominate a new pontiff.

He was, however, deposed, but waiting his opportunity, surprised the castle when it was weakly garrisoned, took possession of it and revenged himself. He cut off the right hand of one cardinal deacon; he mutilated several other great ecclesiastics by slicing their noses, cutting out their tongues and depriving them of their forefingers. A violent death, however, soon overtook him: he was stabbed just outside the gates when concerned in some intrigue.

When Roffredo, prefect of Rome, seized and imprisoned Pope John XIII and the scale presently turned, the emperor, at the pope's request, took summary vengeance on Roffredo and after his death, disinterred the body and flung the corpse into the drains. The reigning prefect was handed over to the pope, who ordered that his beard should be cut off, that he should be hung by his hair to the statue of Marcus Aurelius, and that he should then be stripped, mounted backwards on an ass and driven ignominiously through the streets. The two successive popes, Boniface VII and John XIV, alternately disputed the throne; Boniface cast John into the dungeons of St. Angelo, where he was either strangled or starved to death, while Boniface himself, after a short reign, was overthrown and his dead body subjected to nameless indignities.

At last the Romans, maddened by misgovernment, chose a noble citizen of high character, by name Crescentius, to act as consul and for some few



years the city enjoyed peace and tranquillity. Again the wheel turned, and when Crescentius nominated another pope, John XVI, the emperor seized the wretched pontiff and barbarously misused him by tearing out his eyes and tongue and cutting off his nose. Crescentius himself was besieged in St. Angelo but made so stout a resistance that the place could only be gained by treachery. He had little prospect of beating off Otho but was sturdily defiant when summoned to surrender. The castle with its many towers and innumerable battlements was deemed impregnable, but siege was laid in due form and the attack assisted by the huge military engines or wooden towers in use at the time. Eventually it was taken by assault, Crescentius was beheaded on the battlements, and his remains, after horrible mutilation, were thrown down and hung on a gallows below Monte Mario. He left a widow Stephania who vowed to avenge her husband even at the cost of becoming Otho's mistress, whom she presently put to death by administering poison to him.

This was the saddest period of ecclesiastical history; pope followed pope, all ineffectively striving to maintain order and St. Angelo was sometimes their sanctuary, sometimes their prison house. One or two of the popes who were most unworthy to wear the sacred insignia may be mentioned, such as Benedict IX, who was elected at the callow age of ten. Another pope writing of him fifty years later

said, "I have horror to describe the life of Benedict, how shameful, corrupt and execrable it was." After he had long tormented the Romans by his injustice and cruelty, they would no longer tolerate him, but rose and expelled him from the pontifical seat. He soon returned, and deposing his successor, sold the throne to an archpriest, who took the name of Gregory VI. Benedict thereupon retired into St. Angelo. There were then three popes in Rome, and the emperor appearing on the scene, nominated a fourth. A conflict at once arose with the emperor, Henry IV, and his nominee was attacked, but saved by Cencius, the son of the prefect, who now held St. Angelo and who kept him there safely for two years.

Cencius built a high tower on the bridge opposite St. Angelo and made all who would pass it pay toll to him; but the pope, the famous Hildebrand who was Gregory VII, excommunicated him. He was forcibly seized at the altar and imprisoned until the people came to his rescue. Gregory next fell foul of the emperor and there was a fresh struggle in which the Countess Matilda of Tuscany, a powerful princess, sided with and supported the pope. In the end Henry triumphed, Gregory withdrew into St. Angelo, and from its battlements saw the city sacked and set on fire. Several popes and antipopes then held the castle in turn; it was a constant bone of contention between the powerful factions, and its fortifications were continually strengthened so

that whoever was in possession generally dominated the city.

Toward the end of the twelfth century a pure spirit, that of Arnold of Brescia, arose to denounce the outrageous misconduct of many of the clerical hierarchy, from the supreme head down to the lesser members of the priesthood; and he exposed in vigorous language their profligacy, reckless ambition and tyranny. The high character and unimpeachable virtue of Arnold gave him much influence and the Church rallied all its weight to crush him, but for some time in vain. He fought strenuously for the revival of the old liberties and to exclude the popes from civil government, but the Emperor Frederick with his army made Arnold prisoner, and he was cast into the dungeon of St. Angelo to leave it only to be hanged in the square before the castle. A fierce struggle now ensued between the emperor and the praetors of the Roman senate recently reconstituted. The battle ground was the Leonine city, in front of and around St. Angelo. Victory inclined in turn to each side.

At this epoch Rome was terrorised by the nobles. Issuing from their strongholds — the palaces which they had converted into fortresses — they robbed and pillaged on all sides and forcibly seized citizens whom they held for ransom. The city was depopulated; whole districts lay in ruins, vineyards and vegetable gardens were planted round the Pantheon and the Porta del Popolo. Every one fought for

his own. The senate barricaded itself in the Capitol; the pope was not safe outside his castle of St. Angelo; the great nobles, representing powerful families, claimed their independence and relied upon their strength. The Frangipani were established upon the island in the Tiber and held the Colosseum, the arches of Titus, Constantine and Janus, and the Circus Maximus; the Orsini were masters of the quarter surrounding the Vatican; the Savelli held the district where the Cancelleria now stands; the Pierleoni occupied the theatre of Marcellus and the quarter of the Ghetto; the Colonna were supreme in the district between the Piazza del Popolo and the Quirinal and were also fortified in the mausoleum of Augustus; on the slopes of the Quirinal were the Pandolfi, the Capocci and the Conti.

The cruel oppression and lawlessness of the nobles at last moved the Romans to entrust absolute power to one strong hand acting in their defence. A certain Brancaleone was appointed senator and dictator, with absolute power to insure the peace and quiet of the city by the stern repression of all lawbreakers. He governed justly but with a strong, firm hand. He attacked the turbulent nobles in their fortresses and brought them into submission, visiting them with prompt penalties when they dared to set his authority at defiance. Many he hung from their windows or threw over their battlements. He brought the pope himself into subjection, and when he fled from the city, summoned him

peremptorily to return to the Holy See of which he was the pastor and "wander no more like a vagabond and proscribed person"; and the pope humbly obeyed the order.

It is worthy of note that throughout this long period of dissension and unrest the papal power steadily increased and wielded an authority which was widely respected and obeyed abroad however much it might be resisted at home. The pope never abated his pretensions, and claimed a sovereignty on equal terms with that of the emperor. It often cost him serious reprisals. The pope for the time being might find himself deposed and imprisoned, his life might be endangered and no safety appear but in flight and voluntary exile, but he steadfastly maintained his claims and, in the end, made emperors and kings bow before him, helpless and submissive in face of the formidable weapons of excommunication and interdiction. The pope was "God's vicegerent upon earth to whom was entrusted the government not only of the whole church but of the whole world;" whose power was based upon divine right and by whose delegation and permission alone all other rulers held their authority. The pope settled disputed titles, decided between the rival pretensions of claimants to thrones; his fiat was accepted, his opinion deemed final.

The culminating period of this extensive and unquestioned sovereignty was in the thirteenth cen-

ture during the first half of which the pope's supremacy was universally acknowledged in Europe. But evil days were at hand. The bitter struggle began between the pope and the emperor, Frederick II, who was the first to shake the foundations of the papal throne. The downward movement began with Boniface VIII in 1294, who was cruel and tyrannical and one of the chief causes contributory to the Reformation, through his misuse of the indulgences. After him the power of the popes declined. Benedict IX, his successor, was unable to vindicate the independence of the Holy See against France. The papal court was removed to Avignon, where a succession of popes reigned, while a second set of popes were still elected in Rome, exercising only nominal rule and constantly the prey of contending factions.

The Roman pontiff at this time was without authority, and nothing existed in the city that could fairly be called a government. Warring families still distracted Italy with their dissensions; the Orsini and Colonne continually fought with each other inside Rome and the Guelfs and the Ghibellines beyond it. A brief truce was patched up between parties from time to time, but hostilities were always renewed at every fresh papal election. Anarchy prevailed in Rome and the surrounding country. Robbers and freebooters infested the Campagna, industry and commerce were at a standstill. Week after week St. Angelo was attacked by one party

or another. This was the moment when the celebrated tribune, Rienzi, began his remarkable career, ruling at first with moderation and justice but soon aiming at supreme power and usurping all the attributes of a king. He conducted himself with so little decency, and wasted so much time in idle shows and ceremonies, that he disgusted his followers and his influence crumbled away. With a small but devoted band of men he took refuge in St. Angelo, where he entrenched himself and held the fortress for six months. Then he fled to Civita Vecchia, to return for a brief space and conceal himself in the castle, whence he again fled to Naples. Once more he returned to Rome and was at first received with enthusiasm, but sedition soon broke out, and he was attacked on all sides. A crowd surrounded him and some one plunged a pike into his breast so that he fell fatally wounded. The wild mob rushed upon his corpse and barbarously mutilated it; his head was cut from his body, which was dragged through the streets. At last his lifeless remains, having suffered every indignity, were carried to the mausoleum of Augustus and there burned to ashes.

When the papal court finally left Avignon and was reëstablished in Rome in 1377, the keys of St. Angelo were formally handed to the pope, then Gregory XI. He died within the year and the conclave for the next election met at the castle. The choice fell upon Cardinal Prignano, a Neapolitan,

who became Urban VI. The people wanted a Roman and at first opposed him. The conclave, however, persisted in naming Urban VI, whom the people finally accepted, and who was formally installed at the Vatican. Whereupon the French cardinals in opposition elected an anti-pope and put a Frenchman with a French garrison in charge of St. Angelo. There was now a fierce conflict between the papal and anti-papal party. The French at St. Angelo were reinforced and withstood a sharp siege, holding out for a whole year against an attack, supported by artillery, — the first time that guns were used against the fortress. But it fell at last under the pressure of famine. It was in a sorry plight; immense damage had been done during the siege; some parts had been utterly demolished and all its marbles destroyed. The Roman people, furious at the long resistance it had offered, now wished to raze it to the ground, determined that it should be no longer a refuge for their enemies. Already its earlier decorations had disappeared and the outer casing of marble was torn off, but the solid interior of massive peperino resisted all attempts at destruction. A contemporary writer describes it as impossible to demolish. Ten years later another pope, Boniface IX, more a soldier than a priest, fully convinced of its value, set himself to repair and fortify it anew. An edict was issued forbidding the removal of stone and building material from "Hadrian's Mole," and



Boniface, backed up by the fortress, secured order and obedience in the city for some years.

In the first half of the fifteenth century St. Angelo constantly changed hands — now it was retained, now lost, by succeeding popes. The turbulence of the people was uncontrollable and fresh fighting broke out every few weeks. The clash of arms was outdone by the fury of the elements: the tremors of earthquakes shook the city; fierce tempests ravaged it; and great rains fell, followed by disastrous inundations; the peoples' hearts failed them for fear; eclipses, comets, and other sky portents were frequently to be seen, and close in the wake of these terrors came the dreadful scourges of famine and pestilence. The first ray of hope dawned upon the once splendid city, now little more than an insignificant village, when Pope Nicholas V was elected in 1447. The annals of the time bear witness to his energy in restoring and embellishing the ruined city of Rome. He cleared out many of the shattered houses, erected churches and palaces, founded the Vatican library, and more particularly devoted himself to the strengthening of St. Angelo. The round towers added to the three angles of the ancient square foundation were his work. He began the brickwork curtain of the circular part of the castle; he gave flanking defence to the entrance of the castle from the bridge of St. Angelo, and he made good the damage done to that bridge by the pressure of the crowd on the occasion of the jubilee

commemoration in 1450. Other popes carried on the work; among them Calixtus III, the first of the Borgias, who came to the papal chair in 1455, and Sixtus IV, who employed the celebrated architect and military engineer Antonio da Sangallo to convert the castle into an important and almost impregnable stronghold. Plans and drawings are still extant showing it as it was then, encircled by bastions and massive towers with a line of works joining the defences of the bridge. A fine picture by Carpaccio in the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice has preserved, no doubt faithfully, the aspect of the castle at this time. "Above the circle of the ancient tomb rises a high machicolated square tower occupying almost its entire diameter, and again above this is a second and smaller tower, also machicolated, on the top of which is the figure of the winged angel, the whole surrounded by massive walls, with round towers at each corner. Along the bastions soldiers are blowing trumpets, and flags are flying from the towers. Behind the castle is seen a tall spiral column, on the summit of which stands a naked figure, with a spear and shield, and near it is an octagonal church, surmounted by a narrow dome, both of which, if they ever had an existence out of the mind of the artist, have since utterly disappeared. Ships are also seen lying beyond in the Tiber, from which, apparently, the train of St. Orsola and her bridegroom have just landed. It is marching from them in procession

to the broad terrace in front, where the noble couple are kneeling to receive the benediction of the pope who stands in the foreground under his baldacchino, his robes held up behind by his acolytes, and his train of cardinals and bishops, in white mitres, stretching behind him, the last of them just issuing from a tall turreted gateway in the walls."

Some of the popes of this early period were men of violent and vindictive temper, such as Urban VI, who kept the dungeons full, and when he suspected his cardinals of treachery, put them on the rack to extort confession; or, like Sixtus II, whose chief pleasure was to see his soldiers fight out a challenge to the death; or like Innocent VIII, who was manifestly ill-named. The condition of Rome continued to be dreadful. There were daily turmoils; the soldiers entered the city by night and carried off with violence the most respectable maidens and young married women — taking the latter from their husbands; they poured in and attacked the castle of St. Angelo, plundered it, killed the garrison and abducted labourers employed upon it; again they went forth in battle array and returned with their prisoners taken in fight or seized on suspicion, and all alike were put to the torture. There is no crime with which the annals of the time do not abound. The record is one of perpetual violence, murder, rape and battle. "The whole city," says Infessura, "is filled with villains . . . and the homicides of which they are guilty are considered

as nothing. On the Tor di Nona, close by the castle, bodies of persons are constantly found suspended, of whom nobody knows the names, or cares to know. Executions within the castle are of constant occurrence and they occasion neither surprise nor remark. . . . Every now and then an arm, a hand, a foot, a head, a leg, or some part of a corpse, is nailed up on the wall of the castle to mark the fact of an execution performed; but this is so common that nobody pays any attention to it, unless, indeed, it relate to a person of importance, or to some one engaged in a popular crime, — as was the case of Macrino di Castagno, who agreed with Bajazet to poison his brother Zemi in Rome, and, having been discovered, was executed, quartered and nailed outside the wall.” Any one who committed such an ordinary crime as murder, rape or parricide had only to pay and go free. One instance is related by Infessura, which he witnessed, of a man brought before the vice-chamberlain accused of having killed his two daughters and a servant, who was immediately set free by the vice-chamberlain on condition that he should pay a ransom.

It is recorded that 220 people were assassinated between the date of the death of Innocent VIII in 1492 and the accession of his successor Rodrigo Borgia, who took the name of Alexander VI. The clergy under Innocent were wicked beyond measure, as may be gathered from the edict issued

against them, prohibiting them from keeping shambles, inns, gaming houses and low resorts of the worst kind. Innocent himself was responsible for a triple murder. The treatment last prescribed for him by his Jewish physician was the transfusion of the blood of three young boys of ten years of age into his unwholesome veins, a cruel operation which did not save him and killed the poor children.

Alexander VI gained his election by bribery. Being possessed of immense wealth from the offices he held under his uncle Calixtus III he bought up nearly the whole college of cardinals and overcame all opposition in the conclave. He was weak, irresolute, and cowardly in character; and the condition of Rome, far from improving under his guidance, sank if possible into more complete degradation. There was no safety anywhere from assassination and debauchery, and the state was tormented by constant war. It was a reign of terror. The castle of St. Angelo was crammed with unhappy prisoners, arbitrarily seized, and its walls echoed constantly with their shrieks while undergoing torture, or when put to death by strangulation, poisoning, decapitation and quartering.

“There is nothing so wicked or so criminal,” says a contemporary writer in 1502, “as not to be done publicly at Rome.” Alexander had no policy but that dictated by vacillation; he first sought the aid of the French King, Charles VIII, then formed a league against him; and when the king appeared

in person, bent upon taking Rome, the pope tried conciliation again. Once more, however, he changed front, and treacherously seized the king's envoys, whom he threw into the prison of the castle. Charles steadily continued to advance upon Rome and entered it in triumph at the head of a grand army, horse, foot and many guns. The pope fled for his life and took refuge in the castle of St. Angelo. King Charles summoned him to surrender and brought his artillery to bear upon the castle. At last the city rose in tumult, the pope yielded, conditions of peace were arranged and the French king kissed the pope's hands at the Vatican, after which he withdrew with his army to Naples. Alexander VI was outdone in wickedness by his son Cæsar Borgia, the notorious duke of Valentino, handsome and capable, of determined character and many resources, but withal cruel, treacherous, vicious, hypocritical and totally unprincipled. Between father and son there was little safety in Rome. Unjustifiable arrest was followed by secret poison or the rope. Cardinals and great nobles were done to death, and in the midst of this St. Angelo was almost destroyed as though by the act of God. One day a flash of lightning struck one of the powder magazines which instantly exploded, shattering the upper part of the fortress, blowing the great marble angel from the top and flinging great pieces of the ruin to a considerable distance. It was once more necessary to repair the castle and

Alexander undertook it, recalling the same famous architect Sangallo to execute the work.

Alexander completely restored, if he did not entirely rebuild, the rotunda of the keep upon its ancient masonry; and on the summit he erected a square tower, which still remains, though much hidden. Besides these restorations, he completed the passage, about three thousand feet in length, leading to the Vatican, which had been begun many years before by John XXIII and left unfinished. He also strengthened the fortifications of the castle in other ways, adding bulwarks of travertine between it and the bridge, cutting ditches and making it stronger than before the explosion. Sangallo also opened the inclined passage within the round central chamber, which led to the upper story opening into the so-called Oil Court. Close to this Alexander VI had constructed five formidable prison cells, using them at times as repositories for grain and oil, and a cistern, all of which are still in existence. He likewise began the erection of the papal apartment, completing some of the rooms with the assistance of Pinturicchio. A deep fosse was cut around the castle, which so increased its strength that Cæsar Borgia and his adherents were enabled to withstand an attack of the Roman barons and people who sought to slay him during the vacancy of the pontifical see.

Pope Alexander and his son Cæsar fell victims to a snare they had laid for another. They invited

a cardinal to supper at a garden near the Vatican, meaning to poison him while entertaining him hospitably. Cæsar entrusted the poisoned wine to an attendant with orders to take it to the garden but to allow no one to touch it until he came. The pope arrived before the appointed time, and being overcome with heat and thirst, asked for wine. The attendant gave him that supplied by Cæsar Borgia, conceiving that as it was especially fine, it was intended for the pope's drinking. The duke on arrival also consumed a quantity of it, without suspicion. He escaped the fatal effects of the poison, but the pope succumbed in great agony.

It was the age of poisoning. Pius III, a Piccolomini, Alexander's successor, was poisoned within twenty-five days of his election. Leo X, the next pope, nearly fell a victim to a supposed conspiracy by which his surgeon was induced to poison an ulcer while dressing it. Leo escaped then but died five years later of poison, as it was strongly believed. This dastardly crime was greatly practised in Italy and was always much facilitated and encouraged. To a somewhat later date belongs the deadly *acquatozana* so much used in Naples, and later throughout Europe to terrorise and ravage society. This fatal poison was invented by an old beldame in Naples, who was at last discovered and put to death. Akin to the infamous "succession powder," the noxious drug was especially dear to great ladies tired of their husbands, and lay on their



## Isabella Borgin Danvers

The beautiful and gifted daughter of Pope Alexander VI, was also the sister of the misanthropic Cesare Borgin, who murdered her husband (his brother-in-law), Alfonso of Bisceglia. She was a patron of learning and the arts and was long regarded as the greatest of her time, but more recent writers have somewhat cleared her memory. Her three marriages were arranged to satisfy the ambitions of her father.

## POPE'S POISONS

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### *Lucrezia Borgia Dancing*

The beautiful and gifted daughter of Pope Alexander VI, was also the sister of the infamous Cesare Borgia, who murdered her husband (his brother-in-law), Alfonso of Bisceglia. She was a patron of learning and the arts and was long accused of the gravest crimes, but more recent writers have somewhat cleared her memory. Her three marriages were arranged to satisfy the ambitions of her father.

... then but ... was strongly ... greatly prac- ... facilitated and ... belongs the ... Naples, and ... and ravage ... by an old ... discovered and ... ... bear to ...





dressing tables beside their perfumes and cosmetics, ready for instant administration. During the pontificate of Alexander VII there existed an association among ladies of quality in Rome, pledged to make away with their husbands by poison. Although proofs existed in plenty, the law did not dare to touch such high and mighty dames as the Princess Vitelleschi, the Duchess of Ceri and many others. By and by this system of poisoning extended even to the lower orders, and five women were hanged for having prepared bottles of distilled water containing arsenic by means of which many persons had poisoned their husbands and parents. Several of these were punished by being walled up alive in the dungeons of the Inquisition, and others were publicly beheaded. On the day of the execution a vast crowd gathered in the Campo di Fiori to see the horrible sight. One of the women, a certain Cecilla Bossi Verzellini, who had incited her daughter to poison her husband, was accompanied to the scaffold by a prince Barberini as a member of the confraternity of St. Giovanni Decollato, which confraternity had the sad privilege of attending the condemned in their last moments and of carrying out their last wishes. The prince, pitying the woman, urged the executioner to make haste, whereupon the man replied insolently that perhaps the prince could discharge the task better than he. The execution was left to an assistant, and the hangman was arrested immediately by order of the

governor of Rome, whipped round the city and sent to the galleys. The severe measures used finally effected the suppression of this atrocious crime, if not its abolishment.

## CHAPTER III

### THE GREAT SIEGE OF ST. ANGELO

Leo X — The Castle witnesses many foul deeds — It is beautified and state apartments added — Clement VII improves and embellishes it — The Castle attacked by Charles of Bourbon on behalf of the emperor Charles V — Stands a long siege — Benvenuto Cellini does good service — Remarkable character of that eminent goldsmith — His story as told in his Memoirs — Clement VII takes refuge in the castle — Cellini commands a battery and does great execution upon the enemy — Helps the pope to conceal his jewels.

THE pontificate of Leo X was the golden age of the arts, though crimes of every character were still unchecked in Rome. The pope, one of the Medici of Florence, who had reason to suspect Cardinal Alfonso Petrucci of being privy to a plot to murder him, dissimulated his anger and affectionately invited the cardinal to visit Rome. Petrucci was promised a safe conduct and the pope gave his word to the Spanish ambassador that the cardinal should come to no harm. He arrived accompanied by a friend, also a cardinal, and both were immediately arrested and imprisoned in St. Angelo. An extensive conspiracy was supposed to be on foot, and many other victims found their way to the dungeons of the castle. The exact fate that overtook them was never made known, but it is certain that Pe-

trucci and his friend were put to the torture, and after trial and conviction the first-named was strangled in his cell, and the second was only released after the payment of an exorbitant fine; even then he had purchased freedom with death hanging over him from slow poison which had been administered to him before his release. Leo X also made away with Gian Paolo Baglioni, ruler of Perugia, whom he suspected of a secret understanding with his enemies. Baglioni was distrustful and hesitated to answer a summons to Rome, but went at last, relying upon the fair promises that he should come to no harm. Leo received him at St. Angelo, which he was visiting temporarily, and there was no hope for Baglioni, who was seized and subjected at once to torture, under which he confessed to many crimes. He was then cast into a dungeon, where he lingered for a couple of months, and was eventually decapitated.

Leo X had a strong liking for the castle and constantly resided there in the apartments, most of which are still on view, and which he greatly beautified. By his order Michael Angelo designed the marble front for the chapel of the Angel already erected in the topmost part. This upper story was the scene of a theatrical representation when Ariosto's comedy "*I Suppositi*" was performed under the direction of Cardinal Bibbiena, the stage decorations being the work of Raphael. To facilitate the pope's ascent to the upper story, the gov-



ernor of the castle constructed a lift or elevator communicating from the ground floor to the top of the castle, one of the earliest instances of the domestic use of hydraulics. The remains of this elevator may still be seen in the guiding beams inserted in the well or shaft for the movement of the cage or platform.

Another Medicis, Giulio, who became pope in 1553, with the title of Clement VII, was strenuous in his efforts to embellish the castle, being more eager to decorate and improve it than to strengthen it, although it was destined to receive some severe shocks during his reign. One of his works was to replace the angel destroyed by the gunpowder explosion, and a marble statue was provided by Raphael, son of Baccio da Monte-Lupo, who also added some fine decoration in stone work and scagliola in many of the principal rooms. Clement VII was often at issue with other European potentates and especially with the emperor Charles V, who declared war against him and invaded his dominions. Clement at first hoped that the people of Rome would support him in his resistance to the enemy, but was disappointed, and lingering too long in the Vatican, only escaped capture at the last moment by a hurried flight along the covered passage into his stronghold of St. Angelo. The Leonine city forthwith became the prey of the German troops, who overran the whole Borgo, sacking the houses of the cardinals and courtiers, pillaging the

Vatican and robbing St. Peter's of everything of value. They were checked only by the guns of St. Angelo, and withdrew at nightfall carrying off their booty. The next day the emperor made overtures and terms were arranged at a conference between them. It was only a truce of brief duration, for Clement soon became embroiled with the emperor Charles V and sided with the French against him. This brought on him a fresh and more serious attack from Duke Charles of Bourbon, who, although a cousin of the French king and constable of France, had transferred his services to Charles V.

The following episode in the chequered fortunes of St. Angelo is especially interesting, for it brings upon the scene that strange but remarkable character, Benvenuto Cellini, who was to a great extent the hero of the siege. We have fortunately an ample and graphic record of his adventurous life, by his own hand, in the autobiographical memoirs which Horace Walpole thought "more amusing than any novel" and which are indeed, as they have been styled, "the most entertaining and delightful work in the whole compass of Italian literature." The learned historian Roscoe, who edited these memoirs, ably summarises the advantages enjoyed by the author. Benvenuto Cellini belonged to a golden age of the arts, essentially that of the Old Masters; he was intimately associated with Michael Angelo, Titian and the most eminent sculptors and painters of the time; he was on friendly terms with

popes and monarchs, great princes, powerful statesmen, distinguished commanders, lordly ecclesiastics, and braving displeasure, held his head high, speaking his mind freely to all. We are admitted behind the scenes and see these historic personages in their private and domestic life, betraying themselves unconsciously at their worst, exposing their small vices, their meanness, pettiness, ingratitude, and yielding to their greater passions which often impelled them to cruelty, injustice, rank oppression and violent crime. Cellini's presentment of people and things in his epoch is extraordinarily vivid and forcible; he was a prominent actor in many of the eventful episodes of that stormy period; he had the gift of language and the power to describe with vigour and precision the moving scenes of which he was an eye-witness and frequently participated in. He is conceited, self-sufficient, bombastic; he blows his own trumpet continually and is always full of vain-glorious satisfaction at the supreme excellence of his work and his triumph over all competitors. Of mercurial disposition he is quick to quarrel with any one, to resent offence, not always intended, but ever ready to justify his ebullitions of ill temper, sword in hand to face his enemies and fight all comers. Withal he was a genius of the first water; his productions, as fully proved by the work that survives, were fine specimens of his versatile artistic power, and we need only refer to his principal achievement, the great bronze statue

of Perseus, which all the world admires to-day in the Galeria dei Lanzi of Florence. Cellini was a Florentine, a subject of the Medicis, born in the days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and his father, an admirable artist in ivory, an engineer and a notable musician, was much favoured by that liberal patron of the arts. In his youth Benvenuto bound himself to a goldsmith, and according to Vasari, had "no equal in that branch for many years, nor in making fine figures of alto and basso relievo. . . . He set jewels and adorned them with admirable collets and diminutive figures so exquisitely formed and some of them so curious and fanciful that nothing finer can be conceived." His father would have preferred that he should apply himself to music, but Benvenuto stuck to his trade and, as he tells us, "so great was my inclination to improve that in a few months I rivalled the most skilful journeyman in the business. . . . I continued however to play sometimes through complacence, either upon the flute or the horn, and I constantly drew tears and deep sighs from him when he heard me. From a feeling of filial piety I often gave him that satisfaction, endeavouring to persuade him that it also gave me particular pleasure." Benvenuto being concerned with his brother in a serious affray, was banished from Florence and wandered through some of the northern cities following his trade, but returned and was invited to England in the employment of King Henry VII. He would not leave his

native city, however, where he became the victim of envious rivals "who robbed and calumniated him, doing him the greatest injustice." He says: "They declared loudly they would make me repent, but I, being a stranger to fear, little regarded their menaces." A fierce quarrel soon followed, Benvenuto was injured and retaliated by striking one of his assailants to the ground where he lay motionless and insensible. Drawing a knife he cried: "Some one run for a confessor as there will be no necessity for a surgeon." Benvenuto was arrested and carried before the council of eight, who would have sent him to prison, but through the good offices of friends only a penalty of a fine was imposed. His passionate temper would not suffer him to sink his differences, and running to his workshop, he took up a dagger, meaning to make short work of his adversaries. Single handed he attacked the whole family of the man who had been the originator of the quarrel. They were a dozen in number, all armed with cudgels, hammers and scraps of iron. "Rushing amongst them like a mad bull," he says, "I threw down four or five and fell to the ground along with them, now aiming my dagger at one, now at another." No fatal consequences ensued, however, for Benvenuto adds, "Upon looking about for the wounded and slain, it appeared that none of them had sustained any injury." After this disturbance, Benvenuto knew that he must fly, for the authorities vowed vengeance. The magis-

trates assembled, decreed his immediate arrest, and threatened the severest penalties against any one who dared to grant him an asylum or be privy to his concealment. Cellini's father pleaded for mercy and begged hard that his youthful but hot-headed son might be spared, but was peremptorily bidden to take himself off. There could be no safety for Benvenuto, who forthwith left the city, disguised as a friar accompanied by a lay brother. Outside the walls horses were provided, and the fugitive galloped away to Sienna on the road to Rome. At Sienna he encountered a messenger bringing the news that Cardinal Giulio Medicis had been elected pope and had taken the title of Clement VII.

Fortune smiled on Benvenuto Cellini when he reached the Holy City. He found plenty of work and many kindly patrons; he was permitted to sit at the feet of Michael Angelo, who was then engaged in the adornment of the Sistine Chapel, and was welcomed at the house of Agostino Chigi, who possessed many fine paintings of Raphael, which he was allowed to copy for use in his own designs. Work was plentiful. He received a commission to set some fine diamonds for a beautiful Roman lady and produced a perfect piece, which won him great fame and a substantial reward. Another order came from the bishop of Salamanca for a large silver vase to contain water. But in the midst of this congenial and profitable employment the claims of music once more interposed. By way of pleasing

his aged father, he agreed to join the pope's private band for a special chamber concert, and acquitted himself so well that Clement asked his name. Finding Benvenuto was the son of Giovanni Cellini of Florence, the pope proposed to take him into his service as a musician, but learning that he was an expert goldsmith and jeweller, promised him constant employment in that direction also. Meanwhile the commission for the bishop of Salamanca was being executed, but that proud and overbearing prelate offended Cellini by constantly demanding that the vase should be sent to him, that he might judge for himself what progress was being made. Cellini, quick-tempered as usual, refused to part with it without some payment on account, and the bishop essayed to take the vase by force. A crowd of Spaniards came down upon Cellini's shop, but were faced by Benvenuto with a loaded fowling piece. "Miscreants! traitors! cut-throats!" he cried, "are the houses and shops of citizens to be assaulted in this manner? If any thief amongst you offers to approach this door, I will shoot him dead." The disturbance brought out the neighbours to support Cellini, and he was assured that if he killed the Spanish dogs they would stand by him. Whereupon the Spaniards ran off in a terrible panic and reported the matter to their bishop. The prelate severely reprimanded them for attempting such an act of violence, but he was furiously angry with Benvenuto, and sent a message to him that if he

did not bring the piece of plate directly, he would leave no part of his body entire but his ears. "The proud prelate's menaces did not in the least terrify me," writes Cellini, "and I sent him back word that I should immediately lay the whole affair before the pope."

Having reached this climax, the matter settled down; the bishop's anger subsided, and Benvenuto was assured that he would come to no harm if he acceded to the bishop's request, but would be paid his price on delivery of the piece of plate. Accordingly he clothed himself in a coat of mail, armed himself with a dagger and, followed by a servant carrying the silver vase, proceeded to the bishop's house where he was received in state; the servants were all drawn up around the bishop, who was himself seated in grim displeasure. Benvenuto was not in the least overawed and we may quote his words as he describes the end of the incident: "All this time I never once looked at him, or so much as answered a single word; at which his lordship seemed to discover more resentment than ever and having ordered pen, ink and paper, desired me to write him a receipt. I then looked him full in the face and told him that I would readily do so after I had received my money. The haughty bishop was then more exasperated than ever; but in fine, after a great deal of scolding and hectoring, I was paid and afterwards, having written an acquittance, left the place in high spirits." The pope was highly de-



lighted with this story when it reached him, and entirely approved of Cellini's conduct, so that the bishop of Salamanca regretted and heartily repented what he had done. To make amends he sent word to Cellini, promising him more work, but the irrepressible goldsmith replied that he would undertake no further commissions unless he was paid in advance; an answer at which the pope laughed heartily when it was reported to him. Other patrons came forward; two cardinals, Cibo and Cornaro, ordered plate, and he designed a gold medal for a hat ornament which was esteemed a masterpiece of art. Under the advice of his friends he opened a shop and did an extensive business on his own account, adding to the other occupation that of seal engraver, a branch of art much in demand; for every cardinal had his own seal as large as the palm of a child ten years old, a costly affair and difficult in execution. Cellini applied himself with great assiduity to the work and mastered it. He also acquired the art of enamelling, a very delicate operation on account of the final use of fire which sometimes ruins and destroys the whole production. "I attached myself to it with the greatest ardour, and such was the pleasure I took in learning it that its greatest difficulties appeared delightful to me," he says naively, and goes on to give us an amusing insight into his transparently conceited character. "This was through the peculiar indulgence of the Author of nature, who had gifted me with a genius

so happy that I could with the utmost ease learn anything I gave my mind to. These several branches are very different from each other; inso-much that the man who excels in one seldom or never attains to an equal degree of perfection in any of the rest; whereas I, having exerted myself with the utmost assiduity to be eminent in all these different arts, at last compassed my end." To learn the art of "damascening" or inlaying the blades of daggers with steel or silver was yet another occupation of Cellini's busy hours, which were indeed always full. Yet he still found time to quarrel with a comrade who insulted the Florentines, to slap his face and draw his sword and fight him. He took the plague and recovered from it. He pursued game upon the Campagna and opened up relations with the peasantry, who while working in the vineyards constantly dug up valuable curiosities, ancient medals, cameos and precious stones, which Cellini bought for a few baiocchi and sold to art loving cardinals. Some of these gems were remarkable; such as the emerald as large as a bean, cut into a dolphin's head, and the topaz of the size of a large nut carved into the head of Minerva, and a cameo engraved with a figure of Hercules binding a triple headed Cerberus, of such admirable workmanship that Michael Angelo counted it the most beautiful specimen he had ever seen.

More serious business was at hand for Cellini. He was to be actively and usefully engaged in the

defence of the castle of St. Angelo against the attack of Charles of Bourbon. The constable on behalf of Charles V, learned that Rome was without adequate garrison and suddenly advanced upon it in 1527. Cellini had already given proof of his military qualities and in the time of the rising of the Colonnas had been employed to protect a house in the city with a company he had himself raised. He was again entrusted with a detachment and posted on the city walls. It was his fortune to assist in repelling the assault made by the constable's troops and to perform a remarkable service. Seeing a great gathering of the enemy at one point he discharged his arquebus at the crowd. "I discharged it," he says, "with a deliberate aim at a person who seemed to be lifted above the rest, but the mist prevented me from distinguishing whether he was on horseback or on foot." This chance shot of Cellini's caused extraordinary confusion in the ranks of the assailants as it was proved to have slain the Duke of Bourbon, a fact borne out by other historians, who state that he was killed by a musket shot quite early in the siege.

The attack prospered notwithstanding, for the death of their leader, instead of disheartening his soldiers, roused them to increased effort. A thick fog prevailed and under cover of this the constable's troops crossed the entrenchments and swarmed the ramparts with so much determination that the Romans threw down their arms, and, panic stricken,

sought safety in headlong flight. Meanwhile Pope Clement, who had been at his prayers in the chapel of the Vatican, was roused from his knees by the terrible news that the city was practically captured. Without a moment's pause he ran to the covered passage or corridor communicating with St. Angelo to take refuge in his castle. As he hurried along in frantic haste, he feared that his white robes might betray him to some marksman, so he drew his skirts over his head and in this garb safely reached the wicket gate. A number of cardinals and bishops went with him, eager to seek safety in this welcome retreat. They were safe enough inside, but without the city was given over to pillage and devastation by the savage and bloodthirsty troops. Men were massacred wholesale, women violated, and the air was rent with their shrieks mingled with the groans of the dying. The soldiers, Spaniards and Germans, maddened and infuriated, overran the streets, destroying the palaces, robbing the churches of their furniture and the altars of their relics and sacred ornaments. The horrors of that night of storm and sack are indescribable; the castle alone held out and afforded shelter to the pope and his cardinals, but it was ill-provisioned and could hardly hope to beat off the attack when the brutal soldiery, sated with spoil and slowly recovering from their wild orgies, began a regular siege.

Now Cellini came to the front and distinguished

himself greatly. He had entered the castle with the other fugitives, and eager for active employment, joined a battery of guns under a Florentine named Giuliano. This man was in despair. From the battlements he could see his own house being pillaged, his wife and children in danger, and he did not dare to open fire but, "throwing his match upon the ground made piteous lamentations, tearing his hair and uttering the most doleful cries." The energetic goldsmith promptly interposed, and calling upon others to assist, directed the guns where their fire would be the most effective and killed a considerable number of the enemy. After this Cellini continued to fire, which, he says, "made some cardinals and gentlemen bless me and extol my activity to the skies. Emboldened by this I used my utmost exertions; let it suffice that it was I that preserved the castle that morning."

The pope, appreciating Cellini's value, now permanently appointed him to an important post,—the command of "five great guns in the highest part of the castle, called 'Dall Angiolo,' which goes quite round the fortress and looks both towards the meadows and towards Rome." He was in great heart and says: "I who was at times more inclined to arms than to my own profession, obeyed my orders with such alacrity that I had better success than if I had been following my own business." Placed on this point of vantage, he could watch all that went on and constantly harass the enemy now in

full possession of the city. His life was one of constant excitement and danger. He was knocked over by a ricocheting shot and as he lay prostrate but conscious, he heard the grieved bystanders cry aloud, "Alas! we have lost our best support." Prompt help was given him. A friend who was near at hand, a musician, "having a better turn to physic than music," made a slate red hot, sprinkled it with Greek wine and a handful of wormwood and applied it to Cellini's heart. "Such was the efficacy of the wormwood that it immediately restored my vigour," he writes, and continues: "I made an attempt to speak but found myself unable to articulate because some foolish soldiers had filled my mouth with earth thinking they had thereby given me the last sacrament . . . but the earth did me a great deal more harm than the contusion."

The Holy Father had already shown him especial favour on the occasion above mentioned, when he had done so much execution with his guns. Cellini, who always made the most of his opportunities, had taken advantage of Clement's kindliness to ask a great favour. He says: "Falling upon my knees I intreated his Holiness to absolve me from the guilt of homicide, as likewise from other crimes which I had committed in that castle in the service of the Church. The pope, lifting up his hands, and making the sign of the cross over me, said that he blessed me and gave me his absolution for all the homicides that I had ever committed, or ever

should commit, in the service of the Apostolic Church." Cellini was much trusted by the pope, who conceived a great liking for him seeing that he always acquitted himself with prudence and sagacity. He was much pestered by officious people, especially the cardinals who hung about the battery in robes and scarlet hats and drew on them the enemy's fire, and he states: "I often warned them not to come to me, but persuasion having no effect, I at last got them confined, by which I incurred their enmity and ill will." Altercations nearly brought on a collision, and finally Cardinal Farnese sent his servants to seize Cellini, who turned his guns upon them and promised to open fire on any who dared to ascend the steps leading up to the battery. "Villains," he cried, "if you do not instantly quit the place, or if any of you attempt to mount these stairs, I have two falconets ready charged with which I will blow you to dust!" Having vindicated his authority, Cellini resumed his proper business. He relates: "I now gave my whole attention to firing my guns, by which means I did signal execution, so that I had in a high degree acquired the favour and good graces of His Holiness. There passed not a day that I did not kill some of the army without the castle." One day under the pope's own eye he cut a swaggering Spanish colonel in half by a cleverly aimed long range shot. Again, after much thought, he devised a plan for annoying the enemy when they relieved

the evening guard and passed in great strength through the gate of S. Spirito. The passage having become dangerous, cover had been devised by a traverse of a hundred barrels raised on the side of the castle, whereupon Cellini brought his whole battery to bear upon the barrels and threw them down, inflicting great loss of life. He repeated this several times and so disheartened the besiegers that they were disposed to mutiny and march off. Great execution was also done by making use of certain antique missiles he found in the armoury.

A lucky shot aimed at some unknown person in authority gained Cellini great credit. It proved to be the Prince of Orange, who had sacrificed his fortune and princely position to throw in his lot with the Emperor Charles V, and was now assisting the siege. As numbers of officers of high rank called at the inn to which the wounded prince had been conveyed, the pope "being a person of great sagacity" ordered his chief engineer to concentrate the whole artillery fire upon this inn, thinking that if he could sweep away all these leaders, the army on finding itself without guidance would probably disperse. But Cardinal Orsini, who had been a soldier in his early youth, violently objected to this scheme and came to high words with the pope about it, declaring that if the chiefs were killed, the soldiers being without leadership or control would surely storm the castle, carry it and put every one to the sword. Clement VII yielded helplessly to



the peremptory advice of the masterful cardinal. But the impetuous Cellini by no means agreed; he did not await the order to spare the inn, but of his own motion opened fire with one gun which hit the house and caused great havoc amongst the crowd collected there, so that they were on the point of leaving the place. Cardinal Orsini was greatly incensed at Cellini's insubordinate action, and clamoured to have him hanged or in some way put to death upon the spot. The pope, however, sided with the valiant goldsmith and defended him with great spirit and resolution.

Cellini was useful to the pope in another way and in his own particular line. Feeling himself in the toils and threatened with the loss of his most valuable possessions if not of his life, he sought Cellini's aid in saving his jewels, both his own property and those of the papal regalia. Cellini was called into a very private apartment where the pope sat with his master of the horse and displayed before him the entire collection of these jewels, — a vast quantity of inestimable value. The pope desired him to remove all the stones from their settings, to put all the gold together and secrete the jewels by sewing them into the skirts of the pope's robes. The gold, a hundred pounds' weight, Cellini was to carry to his own chamber in a retired part of the topmost story, close by the battery he commanded, and there melt it down unseen. This feat he accomplished by constructing a small brick fur-

nace, under which he fixed a little pot or dish to receive the gold as it was melted and run through after being thrown upon the live coals above. This was the origin of the grave accusation made against Cellini at a later date of having misappropriated a quantity of the state jewels, a false and mendacious charge, as he easily showed when arrested, but which was used unfairly to subject him to lengthened imprisonment in St. Angelo. This episode occurred during the reign of another pope, Paul III, who was no friend to Benvenuto Cellini.

The siege of St. Angelo by the Imperialists lasted for just one month and was combined with the most brutal ravages in Rome. The invaders were guilty of the most terrible excesses; rapine and slaughter constantly vexed the city, which soon sank into a state of deplorable ruin. For a time the pope entertained strong hopes of relief from the army of the league commanded by the Duke of Urbino, and beacon fires were constantly kept burning on the castle to indicate that it still held out. At one time succour seemed near at hand and the banners of Guido Rangoni were seen in the distance on Monte Mario, but they soon fell back and with them disappeared all hope of rescue. Clement now became the victim of abject and consuming fear; he was ready to accept any terms, however humiliating, provided his life was spared. With abundant tears he cried out that since fortune had brought him to such a pass he would make no further re-

sistance, but would surrender himself and all his cardinals into the emperor's hands. When such was the state of affairs, defence was vain, and on the 5th of June a capitulation was concluded on the hardest of terms. The pope agreed, first, to pay 100,000 ducats down, 50,000 more in twenty days, and a final 250,000 in two months; second, to give up the castle of St. Angelo with those of Civita Castellana and Civita Vecchia to the emperor; third, to remain a prisoner until the entire sum was liquidated; and fourth, to hand over the cities of Parma and Modena. Clement was, however, penniless and unable to meet a tithe of these onerous conditions. The cities and fortresses rejected the terms of capitulation and refused to open their gates. Vainly the church plate was melted and cardinals' hats were sold to raise money. The sum required still fell short of the agreed ransom, and he was forced to remain in the castle as prisoner, guarded by Don Fernando de Alarcon with three Spanish and three German companies.

At length, in the beginning of October, the terms were modified and an arrangement finally concluded for the liberation of the pope. Clement was to deliver up all the fortresses in his possession, to raise what he could by the sale of twenty-seven cardinals' hats and in other ways, and pay over this sum. On the evening of the 8th October, weary of the whole proceeding and even then doubting the good faith of his enemies, he disguised himself as

a pedlar, threw a sack over his back, shrouded himself in a great cloak, pulled down his hat upon his brows and slipped out of the castle. Those who met him feigned not to recognise him. He went on foot through the city gates, and at a garden gate beyond he found a Spanish mule which had been sent by the Cardinal Colonna; on this he mounted and rode alone to Orvieto.

Benvenuto Cellini left the castle of St. Angelo at the end of the siege, and paid a visit to his native city, Florence, in which the plague had made terrible ravages and which had also passed through a revolution. The pope's power and that of the Medicis family had been set aside for a republic. But Clement VII had no sooner made peace with the emperor and felt himself secure, than he vindicated his authority over Florence, which again became a hereditary principality. Benvenuto at first sided with his own people, but presently yielded to the overtures made him by the pope through a certain Jacobo della Barca, who was in high favour with Clement and who strongly advised him not to join a pack of senseless rebels who were acting against His Holiness.

## CHAPTER IV

### ADVENTURES OF CELLINI

Cellini favoured by Clement VII and receives an important commission — Paul III succeeds Clement and is no friend to Cellini — Benvenuto slays a rival jeweller, Pompeo — Pier Luigi, the new pope's nephew, vows vengeance — He is arrested on the charge of having appropriated to his own use jewels entrusted to him by Clement VII during the siege — The case fails but Cellini is committed to St. Angelo — Thrilling escape — A Venetian Cardinal, Cornaro, gives him a refuge, but surrenders him in exchange for a bishopric — Cellini sent back to St. Angelo — Released by the good offices of Francis I of France — Paul III does much for St. Angelo — The great Hall he built still intact and much admired.

CELLINI went back to the Holy City and resumed his work as a goldsmith. He was graciously received in audience by the pope, who was overjoyed at the sight of him. Cellini was, on the contrary, greatly downcast, and confessed that having received no payment for his trouble in breaking up the papal jewels he had appropriated a portion of the molten gold to indemnify himself; and he now sought absolution which the priests had hitherto refused him. The pope readily forgave him, expressing his concern that he had had no reward and now freely making him a present of what he had already ab-

stracted; he also gave him a valuable commission, entrusting him with a magnificent diamond and other jewels to set in a gold button for the pontifical cope. In this he succeeded admirably and produced a piece of the most exquisite art, according to Vasari, the contemporary critic. But he stirred up the jealousy of the pope's favourite gentleman of the bedchamber, who protested that too much favour was shown to this presumptuous young man. Yet Cellini continued to retain the pope's good graces, and was more and more employed in the stamping of medals and coins for the papal mint, and of one fine piece it was said that His Holiness might boast that he possessed a coin superior to that struck for any Roman emperor.

About this time Cellini got into serious trouble by attacking and engaging in a duel with one of the city guard who had murdered his brother in a brawl. He was not immediately arrested, and a gentleman informed him that the pope knew all that had happened, but that His Holiness was very much his friend and desired him to go on with his business without giving himself any uneasiness. Then his shop was broken into by a thief just as he was in possession of a great part of the pope's jewels, but fortunately they were not taken, yet the pope was told that the story of the robbery was fabricated to explain the disappearance of the property. Cellini, however, promptly repaired to the Vatican and produced the jewels, saying, "Holy Father, they

are all here, not one missing," and His Holiness replied with a serene brow, "Then you are indeed welcome."

For the rest of Clement's pontificate the relations between him and Cellini varied; now the jeweller was in high favour, now in disgrace. Jealous rivals maligned him; Cellini retorted by personal attack. His rash hands readily obeyed his quick temper; he struck down an enemy wherever he met him and then fled to escape just consequences. Throughout he laboured assiduously at his art. One of his finest works was a gold chalice for the pope and he was employed to make the stamp for the Roman mint, and it is agreed that his coins were the finest produced. Then a great change came over his fortunes; Pope Clement VII died and was succeeded by Paul III, a Farnese and no friend to Cellini, who had also incurred the bitter enmity of one Pier Luigi, the new pope's nephew. Benvenuto went wrong at once by following up an old quarrel with another jeweller, Pompeo, who had been in the service of Clement and constantly at variance with Cellini. One day Pompeo came to his shop, Cellini relates, and stopping in front of the door, "whilst you might say a couple of Ave Marias, began to laugh in my face; and when he went off his comrades fell a laughing likewise, shook their heads and made many gestures in derision and defiance of me." Cellini, hot-headed as usual, was easily spurred on by his friends to retaliate; he followed

Pompeo down the street and met him as he came out of a shop where he had been boasting of having bullied Cellini, who continues: "I thereupon clapped my hand to a sharp dagger and laid hold of him by the throat so quickly and with such presence of mind that there was no one who could defend him. I pulled him towards me to give him a blow in front but he turned his face about through excess of terror so that I wounded him exactly under the ear; and upon my repeating my blow he fell down dead. It had never been my intention to kill him but blows are not always under command."

Cellini found protectors. Cardinal Cornaro, a Venetian, sent out a party of soldiers to bring him safely to his house. At the same time Cardinal de Medicis proposed to befriend him but Cornaro angrily refused to part with Cellini, vowing that he was as proper a person to take care of him as De Medicis. At that time the new pope, Paul III, came into power and called for Cellini, meaning to employ him again at the mint. They told Paul that Cellini had absconded for having killed one Pompeo in a fray, but the pope would not interfere, declaring that "men who are masters in their profession like Benvenuto should not be subject to the laws, but he less than any other, for I am sensible that he was right in the whole affair. I have often heard of Benvenuto's provocation, so let a safe conduct be made out and that will secure him from all manner of danger." After that Cellini resumed his business



and was again employed by the pope's order at the mint.

He was not, however, suffered to escape the vengeance of Pompeo's relations. A daughter of the murdered man had married a natural son of Pier Luigi, the pope's nephew, an unscrupulous but powerful person who readily promised to have Cellini arrested. Although "he was lavish of demonstrations of kindness to me," says Benvenuto, "he had at the same time given orders to the captain of the city guard to seize me or get somebody to assassinate me." Of the two courses the latter was chosen, and a cut-throat Corsican soldier was engaged to do the work, who gave it out that "he would make no more of it than swallowing a new laid egg." Cellini was informed of his danger and kept a constant look-out, going about always well accompanied and armed with a coat of mail which he had received permission from the government to wear. When they met face to face, Cellini told the soldier that he had to deal with one who would sell his life very dear. "All this while," says Cellini, "I stood upon my guard with a stern and watchful eye and we both changed colour. By this time a crowd was gathered round us . . . so that he had not the spirit to attack me." Indeed the bravo afterwards assured Cellini that he had nothing more to fear from him, but that he would for the future consider him as a brother.

Pier Luigi, foiled in the assassination planned,

gave orders on his own authority that Cellini should be taken into custody, whereupon the goldsmith took post the same night for Florence, where he was well received by Duke Alessandro de Medicis, who employed him in the mint until the pope sent him an ample safe conduct and ordered him to return to Rome to clear himself of the charge of murder. The duke advised him to remain in Florence, but Cellini, having a shop open in the Holy City, and a staff of workmen, resolved to venture back. He had no sooner arrived than the city guard fell upon him but after a scuffle left him in peace, upon his production of the safe conduct. Later he was called upon to give himself up as a prisoner, as a matter of form, so as to qualify for pardon, but the pope, upon his petition, fully forgave him. A terrible illness now attacked him, from which he did not recover until he returned to his native air of Florence, where he remained for some time, following his business, going farther afield into France and encountering many curious adventures. Once more he found himself in Rome and was to be subjected to a series of grievous trials quite unforeseen by him, and due to the persistent malignity of his enemies. He was again to make the acquaintance of the interior of the castle of St. Angelo, and this time painfully and ingloriously, as a helpless and much persecuted prisoner.

Among the workmen in his employment was a native of Perugia whom he had greatly trusted and

liberally paid. The ungrateful wretch suddenly left his service at a most inconvenient time and trumped up a false charge against his master, giving information to Luigi that Cellini had detained a large portion of the jewels entrusted to him by Clement VII during the siege. The crime imputed to Cellini was that when he had removed the precious stones from their settings, he had sewn them up in his own clothes and subsequently disposed of them for 80,000 crowns. This nefarious transaction was vouched for by the treacherous journeyman, who declared that Cellini had confided to him that he held the jewels securely concealed in his shop. Luigi, a man of vicious, dissipated habits, was consumed with greed, and going to the pope obtained a promise from him of the reversion of the 80,000 crowns when recovered from Cellini, who was to be forthwith arrested and examined. When the captain of the city guard arrived and took him in charge as the pope's prisoner, Cellini protested, "You mistake your man." "By no means," replied the captain, "you are the ingenious artist Benvenuto, I know you very well and have orders to conduct you to St. Angelo, where noblemen and men of genius like yourself are confined." He was accordingly carried there and brought before three judges appointed to bring the affair to an issue. They detailed the charge as given above, commanding him either to find the jewels themselves or the value of them, after which he would be set at large.

Cellini indignantly repudiated the charge, protesting that although he had resided for twenty years in Rome he had never before been imprisoned, either in the castle or elsewhere. Here the governor interposed pertinently; "Yet you have killed men enough in your time." Cellini retorted that he had always acted in self-defence or in anticipation of murderous attack and proceeded with his defence. It was simple and very much to the point; he invited the judges to examine the books wherein would be found a full list of the papal jewels and called upon them to compare it with the valuables in possession. He reminded them that these registers had always been kept with extreme accuracy and that the comparison he suggested would result in his complete acquittal. At the same time, he adverted to his services during the siege, pointing out that but for him the Imperialists would have gained possession of the castle when they first arrived, and recalling his wounding of the Prince of Orange.

In the end Cellini was entirely exonerated and it was clearly shown that he could not have appropriated any of the pope's jewels, for not a single one was missing. The judges accordingly absolved him, and he was entitled to immediate release. Unhappily, the king of France, Francis I, had heard that Cellini had been committed unjustly to durance, and pleaded for his prompt enlargement. The pope refused, and bade the king to give himself no further concern about such a turbulent

and troublesome fellow; that Cellini was kept in prison for committing murder and atrocious crimes. The king still pressed his claim, insisting that Cellini was now in his service and required that he should be sent to him. But the pope held on to him, fearing that Cellini would make an exposure upon reaching France, after his arbitrary illegal detention.

He was not, however, treated with much severity. The constable of the castle was a fellow countryman, Ugolino, and this worthy Florentine put him on his parole, suffering him to go freely throughout the castle. Neither was Cellini debarred from working at his business; his shop remained open in the city and his servants came and went, seeking and carrying out his instructions. But a fellow prisoner pestered him with insidious and dishonourable counsels, and urged that while imprisoned he was not bound to keep his word. Cellini declined to be led astray, but was next invited to explain how he would proceed if kept a close prisoner and not upon his parole. Full of vain glory, he boasted that he could open any lock whatsoever, and especially those of St. Angelo, which he could force as easily as he could eat a bit of cheese. His companion laughed at his pretensions and Cellini, to make them good, showed him how to fabricate false keys. The lesson was so quickly learned that the monk copied them in some wax which he stole from the goldsmith who had been using it to make

models of little figures and specimens. The attempt to counterfeit keys fell into the hands of the governor of the castle, who blamed Cellini and withdrew from him the privilege of free passage which he had hitherto enjoyed. Cellini, resenting this more rigorous treatment, so unjustly imposed, began to think seriously whether he could not compass escape. He set to work in the conventional manner with the manufacture of a rope to help him in his descent from the high tower of his prison house. He ordered his servant to bring him fresh sheets and did not return the soiled ones, when asked for them, replying that he had given them to the poorer soldiers of the garrison, who must not be betrayed or they would be committed to the galleys. This process being frequently repeated, in due course he provided a great length of rope sufficient to reach from the top to the bottom of the great tower.

At this stage his difficulties were multiplied by the constable, with whom he had a discussion, which ended in his being more closely confined. This Ugolino was subject to a strange affection at a certain period of the year. He went completely out of his mind and was the prey of extraordinary delusions. At one time he thought he had been metamorphosed into a pitcher of oil; at another he fancied he was a frog and jumped about; again, he firmly believed he was dead, and it became necessary to humour him by mock burial. The next mad

notion was that he had been changed into a bat, and he made gestures with his hands and moved his body as if he were going to fly. He greatly delighted in a visit from Cellini, who talked with him for hours indulging all his crazy whims. Once he asked his prisoner whether he ever wanted to fly and was answered in the affirmative. Cellini said that he had studied the methods of the several creatures that took wing, and believed that he could imitate a bat. This fitted in with the constable's mad fancy, and he at once agreed that Cellini could fly if he tried. "But I hope you won't try," added the governor disconsolately, "I should like to see it but the pope has enjoined me to watch over you with the utmost care, and I know that you have the cunning of the devil, and would avail yourself of the opportunity to make your escape. I am resolved to keep you locked up with a hundred keys that you may not slip out of my hands." This did not suit Cellini and he besought the governor to make his condition no worse than it had been, but all to no purpose, and he was carried off into the closest confinement.

The prisoner was goaded now into greater determination to get away. He completed his rope and then turned his attention to the door of his cell chamber. This was protected by iron plates fastened in with nails, to extract which Cellini used a pair of pincers he had purloined from the carpenter and cooper of the castle. The holes thus

made he filled in with a paste made of rusty iron filings mixed with wax, but two nails, one at the top and one at the bottom, he drove in a short way to keep each plate in its place. All his tools and the nails he extracted he secreted in the tick of his bed which he allowed no one to touch, declaring that they were unworthy to handle any of his belongings. He also swept out his room himself, for the same reason, that no one should discover what he was about. When he threatened those who would have interfered with his bed and they reported him to the constable, the latter took Cellini's part. There was no fear of his prisoner's escape, he said, if he got out of the castle, for he (Ugolino) as the bat flew so well, that he would be sure to catch up with the fugitive. But Cellini made short work of the descent, only to find that two newly built walls shut in the inner gate and he must surmount them before he went free. A sentinel approached at the last moment, but sheered off at the sight of Cellini's dagger and his murderous looks. He was now on the top of the last wall and hitching his rope to the niched battlement he began to let himself down. He relates: "Whether it was preparing to give a leap or whether my hands had lost their power, I do not know, but being unable to hold on any longer I fell and in falling struck my head and became quite insensible.

"When I recovered after an hour and a half as nearly as I could guess, the day was beginning



to break and the cool breeze that precedes the rising of the sun brought me to myself, but I had not yet regained my senses and I conceived the strange notion that I had been beheaded and was then in purgatory. . . . I clapped my hands to my head and found them all bloody, and I found that my leg was broken, three inches above the heel. The hurt had been caused by the scabbard of my dagger, which I now threw away and cutting the part of my rope of sheeting that still remained, I bandaged my leg as well as I could. I then crept on my hands and knees towards the gate, and after travelling some five hundred paces at last effected my egress," from the castle enclosure and entered the city.

Two or three great mastiffs ran up and worried him but he beat them off with his dagger and crawled on. It was now broad daylight and he happened upon a water carrier who, at his entreaty, lifted him on his ass's back and took him as far as the steps of St. Peter's. Here he was fortunately found by a servant of his friend Cardinal Cornaro, who conveyed the news to his master and was desired to bring the wounded man into the cardinal's apartments, where he was put to bed and a surgeon summoned. His leg was set and he was bled, then the cardinal hastened to the Vatican to intercede for Cellini with the pope. Another friend accompanied him. They were well received; "I know what you want," cried the pope. "I am concerned to

hear of Benvenuto's sufferings, but bid him take care of his health and when he is thoroughly recovered it shall be my study to make him some amends for his past sufferings." Only the constable of the castle made a great outcry and declared that he would be disgraced if his prisoner were not sent back to him, adding that Cellini had promised on his honour not to fly away and he had flown notwithstanding.

The pope was still well disposed, however. "This Benvenuto is a brave fellow," he said, "and his exploit is very extraordinary. Yet when I was a young man I descended from the very same place." This was true enough. He had himself been a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo, confined by Pope Alexander VI, for forging a papal brief, and fully expected sentence of death. But execution was delayed and Farnese (Paul III) bribed some of his guard to put him into a basket and let him down from the tower.

Still Cellini was the hero of the hour. Numbers of the nobility and gentlefolk called upon him and honoured him as a man that had performed miracles. He writes: "Some of them made me promises, whilst others made me presents." One enemy was still bitter and implacable. This was Pier Luigi, now duke of Parma, who strongly opposed his pardon, protesting that if this man were liberated, he would do something still more daring for he was "one of the boldest and most audacious

of mortals." At this time Cardinal Cornaro was intriguing to get a bishopric for one of his gentlemen, and the pope was willing to make a bargain with him, — the bishopric in exchange for Cellini, "and so," says Cellini, "I was sold by a Venetian cardinal to a Roman of the Farnese family, both of whom in so doing violated the most sacred laws." Cellini was on the point of getting himself smuggled out of Rome concealed inside a mattress, but he was suddenly seized by the pope's order, and Cardinal Cornaro's consent, and carried first to the Tor di Nona and lodged in the place assigned to condemned criminals; thence he was conveyed back to the castle in a litter, on account of his broken leg, and was very civilly treated.

The constable, however, owed him a great grudge for having escaped and threw him into a dark room under the garden, which had much water lying in it and was infested with tarantulas and other poisonous insects. He was given a mattress and a blanket and strongly locked in. He goes on: "Thus wretchedly did I drag on my time . . . in three days everything in the room was under water, yet with my broken leg I could hardly stir an inch and was obliged to crawl about with great difficulty. Only for about an hour and a half I enjoyed a little of the reflected light of the sun, and I passed the remainder of the day and night in the dark patiently, having but little doubt that in a few days I should end my miserable life. Only I was com-

forted with the thought that I had been spared the excruciating pangs of being flayed alive," a fate that he was told impended when he was a captive in the Tor di Nona. His sufferings must have been acute nevertheless. Nothing gave him more pain than his nails, which had grown to an inordinate length. "I could not touch myself without being cut by them, neither was I able to put on my clothes because they pricked and gave the most exquisite pain. My teeth likewise rotted in my mouth, and this I perceived because the foul teeth were pushed forward by the sound ones and the stumps came beyond their sockets when I pulled them as it were out of a scabbard without any pain or effusion of blood. Then being reconciled to my other sufferings, one time I sang, another time I played and sometimes wrote (verses) with the compound of brick dust."

This last refers to the ink he manufactured from the powder of rotten bricks, his pen being a splinter of wood he had gnawed with his teeth from the back of his door, and his paper one of the blank leaves of the Bible which was now his inseparable companion. His piety became exemplary; he was constantly on his knees at prayer. His keepers resented this and roughly handled him, carrying him away by the light of a torch, as Cellini thought, to the sink of Sammalo, "a frightful place where many have been swallowed up alive by falling from thence into a well under the foundations of the

castle." But his fate was only to be immured in a dismal cell where a previous occupant, a victim of Clement VII, had been starved to death. Here he saw visions, divine visitors appeared to him and he was in a state of mental exaltation not far removed from madness. A sonnet he then indited gained him much sympathy and was deemed the work of "a worthy and virtuous person" and the pope was moved to release him, but still listened to the malevolent counsels of Pier Luigi to keep him a prisoner.

There was a dastardly plot against Cellini's life from the moment of his reincarceration. Cardinal Cornaro had warned him to touch no food that had been dressed in the pope's kitchen, plainly hinting that it would be poisoned, but to eat only the victuals provided by the Cardinal. These also were tampered with by the admixture of the powder of a pounded diamond. "This is not a poison in itself," Cellini tells us, "but it is so excessively hard that it retains its acute angles, differing from other stones . . . and when the powder enters the stomach with the meat and the operation of digestion is being performed, the particles of the diamond stick to the cartilages and perforate them. . . . On the day that it was administered to me, being Good Friday, they put it into all my victuals, into the salad, the sauce and the soup. When I had done dinner, as there remained a little of the salad on the dish, I happened to fix my eyes on some of the

smallest particles remaining and examining them in a strong light I thought I realized what had been done and I concluded myself to be a dead man.

“But some glimmering hope was left to me, for taking up some of the grains on my knife I pressed them hard on an iron surface and heard them crack. ‘This is not a diamond then,’ I said joyfully, ‘it is the dust of some more common and brittle stone which will do me no injury.’ And I found afterwards that although a real diamond had been provided originally to be ground into powder, the jeweller to whom it had been handed appropriated it himself and instituted an imitation stone, not worth twenty pence.” After this Cellini, giving his reasons, besought a fellow prisoner, the bishop of Pavia and his next door neighbour, to supply him with food from his own table, and suspecting ever that some fresh attempt might be tried, he ate nothing that was not first tasted by the servant who brought it.

Suddenly a change came over the situation. The cardinal of Ferrara came to Rome from France, and after an audience with the pope and a long and pleasant conversation, seeing him in a good humour and likely to grant favours, begged him in the most earnest manner imaginable to take pity upon Cellini. Many of his friends had already spoken on his behalf but vainly. “Although we make earnest and constant solicitation,” writes one, “yet there is no knowing how far the harshness and rage of

this old fellow (Pope Paul III) will proceed. His (Cellini's) offence is no more than what he has amply expiated by his sufferings. If his own perverse nature, which is certainly very obstinate, does not stand in the way, I entertain good hopes." Luckily, the cardinal of Ferrara interposed opportunely, the Holy Father was mellow with wine and laughingly cried, "Take Benvenuto home with you without a moment's delay," giving the necessary orders on the spot and before a whisper could reach Pier Luigi, who would certainly have opposed the release. The pope's permission reached the prison in the dead of night, Cellini was at once set free and conducted to the cardinal's house, where he was well lodged and enjoyed the happiness which recovered liberty can bestow. His friends rejoiced greatly, but were still in doubt that Benvenuto would be permanently benefited. "In a little time his affairs should do well if he would let them," says one, "but for that unmanageable head of his which makes one doubt whether there be anything fixed and certain in the world. We are continually holding up his own interest before his eyes, but he will not see it; the more we say the less he is inclined to hear." His position was indeed by no means secure, for the very next day the pope had already repented of setting Cellini free.

From this time forth Benvenuto was no more connected with the castle of St. Angelo, and his personal adventures do not concern us further. He

presently transferred himself to Paris and entered the service of the French king, Francis I, with whom he remained for some years, obtaining a grant of naturalisation. He carried out a number of fine designs in his work, but was constantly engulfed in the intrigues of the court. He returned eventually to Florence, where he was commissioned to produce the great bronze of Perseus, which was long delayed in execution by the cabals and conspiracies of which he was perpetually the victim. When completed, it proved a very perfect piece of statuary, the more remarkable because Cellini had been chiefly successful heretofore with small figures. Vasari says that the work cannot be sufficiently commended. Vasari's appreciation of Benvenuto is worth quoting. He describes him "as a man of great spirit and vivacity, bold, active, enterprising and formidable to his enemies, a man in short who knew as well how to speak to princes as to exert himself in his art."

This pope, Paul III, who so maltreated Cellini, did much for St. Angelo to improve it as a residence. He added the upper floor to the papal apartments and caused it to be decorated magnificently by the best living artists, painters and sculptors, who endowed it with many inestimable art treasures, some of which are still preserved. The great hall of Paul III is still in existence. It was used as a council chamber and adorned with fresco paintings by Perino del Vaga, representing the



history of Alexander the Great, which are still intact. At one end is a colossal portrait of Hadrian, the founder of the mausoleum, and opposite it a fresco of the archangel Michael with his wings spread, the original model for the great statue on the top of the castle. The square hall which Paul built is richly decorated with figures in relief by Julio Romano and above them is a graceful frieze of Tritons and Nereids disporting in the sea.

Yet this beautiful residence of the papal court was still the scene of cruel imprisonment. A number of noblemen, including two cardinals, Caraffa and the duke of Palliano, were imprisoned there, charged with heinous crimes. A slow, wearisome trial followed, and after nearly a year Cardinal Carlo Caraffa was found guilty of murder and was strangled the following night in the square hall. At the same time, in the Tor di Nona across the river, the duke and two others were beheaded, while Cardinal Alfonso Caraffa was heavily fined. Yet under the next pope, Pius V, the sentences were declared unjust and the judge who had pronounced them was in his turn decapitated.

Rome continued in a turbulent state. At the meeting of another conclave, the people rose, broke open the prisons and set free four hundred prisoners. The palace of the Inquisition was also attacked and many persons who had long languished there without trial were liberated, while the chief Inquisitor, Ghislieri, who subsequently became pope,

all but forfeited his life. The mob went raging through the streets, casting down precious statues and destroying ancient monuments; but peace was presently restored through the efforts of two powerful noblemen, and the new pope, Pius IV (a Medicis), granted an amnesty and pardon to all offenders. He took the precaution to guard against future riots by strongly fortifying the Borgo and constructing a new enclosure which took in the castle of St. Angelo, the Vatican and St. Peter's, having space within for the marshalling and manœuvre of a large body of cavalry. The castle at this date, 1580-5, is described as having a double cincture of fortifications, a large round tower overlooking the inner end of the bridge, two other towers with lofty pinnacles surmounted by the cross, and all surrounded by the river.

## CHAPTER V

### SIXTUS THE FIFTH

The most remarkable of Popes — State of Rome under Gregory XIII — Murders, thefts and robberies openly perpetrated in the streets — Brigandage rife up to the very gates of the city — Sixtus V wins the election — Seizes the reins of government with masterful hands — Sternly vindicates the law by the summary execution of offenders — Earliest efforts directed against brigandage — Curbs the insolent daring of robbers — Represses every kind of crime — The story of Vittoria Accoramboni — Boons conferred by Sixtus upon Rome — His accumulation of great wealth — St. Angelo his Treasury — His onerous taxation resented by the people, who lampoon him continually — Pasquinades.

A STRONG government was now to follow one of the weakest. Gregory XIII was succeeded by Sixtus V, the most remarkable pope who ever sat upon the papal throne, famous in history for his romantic rise to power, and for the austere manner in which he exercised it. Gregory, although learned in the law, was a feeble, timid ruler whose authority was scouted, and the wildest disorder prevailed in the city. The worst crimes were committed with impunity, and the period became a byword with coming generations. The expression "in the time of Gregory" was held to be the equivalent of lawlessness and unrestrained violence. During his pa-

pacy, assassination and brigandage incessantly vexed society; perpetual conflicts were fought in the streets between the retainers of powerful families. Cardinals and great ecclesiastics were attacked when they drove out in their carriages, were seized and prevented from returning to their own houses, and obliged to seek the protection of armed escorts. On one occasion the police, having arrested a criminal belonging to the Orsini faction, were forced by the adherents of three great families to surrender their prisoner. The fight lasted for three days, during which the streets were strewn with dead and wounded, the shops were closed and the turmoil extended over the whole city. The matter was settled at last by the sacrifice of the Bargello, or chief police officer, who was handed over to the Orsini and immediately put to death.

Outside Rome still greater disorder reigned. Bandits infested the Campagna and the neighbouring provinces. They were led by the highest nobles, who shared their plunder and in return gave them protection and support. Some of the most reckless and unprincipled will be described more particularly when dealing with the government of Sixtus V. The election of this resolute and capable pontiff has been called an accident and it certainly came as a surprise, but the result was mainly due to his consummate cleverness in playing a part which deceived everyone and gained him a preponderance of votes. There were many conflicting parties in the

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conclave, all bitterly jealous of each other, and this Cardinal Montalto, as he was commonly called, although his real name was Felice Peretti, secured general support because no one was afraid of him or thought he had the smallest chance of success. For some years past, Montalto had posed as an imbecile, afflicted prematurely with all the infirmities of age. He was generally despised by the whole college of cardinals as a foolish old dotard, helpless and incapable of good or ill, and was held up to common ridicule by the nickname given him of the "ass of La Marca," referring to his native province. His conduct and demeanour for years past had, no doubt, encouraged the opinion conceived of him. Pope Gregory, with whom he had been associated in Spain, when Gregory went there as legate, had treated him with indignity and contempt, had withdrawn his pension and withheld all preferment. Montalto, with marked meekness and humility, accepted his position; he effaced himself as much as possible, seldom if ever attending a consistory or congregation; he held aloof from all public transactions and never mixed himself in any of the intrigues always active in the papal court. He resided in a small house he had bought in Rome, among the vineyards near S. Maria Maggiore and occupied himself wholly with good works.

Let me digress for one moment to relate how this modest and unpretending monk (for he belonged to the Franciscan order), came to be a cardinal and

a prince of the church. He was born in the village of Grottamarina in the province of La Marca D'Ancona and was keeping pigs at the age of nine, when a priest who had lost his way sought his guidance to the town of Ascoli, where he was going to preach. The child beguiled the way with many shrewd remarks and pertinent questions and the priest charmed with his intelligence, took him by the hand, and at once decided to educate him. Little Felix made such surprising progress that he was accepted as a novice in the Franciscan order at the early age of fourteen. He rose rapidly in the Church, and having the gift of eloquence, became a learned theologian, a popular preacher, and an able disputant, so that he was held in general esteem. One bishop told him that if he were pope, he would soon give Felix a cardinal's hat. Very liberal and tempting proposals were made to him to remain in Spain when he went there with Gregory, but his heart clung to Rome, to which he returned, when he was made general of the Franciscan order, a bishop and later a cardinal. He had also the direction of the papal councils and it may be noted that the bull of excommunication fulminated against Queen Elizabeth of England was drawn up by him.

"It was about this time," says one of his biographers, "that he secretly began to indulge ambitious dreams and looked to succeed some day to the papacy." He became humble, patient and affable, artfully concealing the natural impetuosity of his

temper and comporting himself with extreme gentleness and moderation toward all. Nevertheless he was generally despised and overlooked, but he showed no disappointment or resentment and quietly bided his time. His opportunity came at the death of Gregory XIII when the conclave assembled to choose his successor. There were several candidates, each with nicely balanced claims. No one party was powerful enough to win the day for its nominee, and it seemed to one and all that the best plan would be to favour the election of some aged invalid who would speedily make way for another election. Montalto was just the person, and when the three most influential cardinals came to tell him of their choice, he was seized with such a violent fit of coughing that they feared he would expire on the spot. He recovered himself so far as to assure them that his reign would not last many days, that he breathed with difficulty and that his strength was quite unequal to the weighty cares of office. He went further, and would not give his consent to wear the tiara unless they promised to assist him with their counsels, saying: "If you are resolved to make me pope, you will really be placing yourselves upon the throne; I shall be content with the bare title, let them call me pope and you are welcome to the power and authority."

When his point was gained and his election assured, he threw off the mask he had worn for fourteen years or more and appeared in his true colours.

It was a complete transformation. He no longer leaned painfully on his crutches, but held himself erect, gave up coughing, and spoke with a strong and authoritative voice; his manner was completely changed, his humility was gone; he ceased to be quiet and submissive, and treated everyone with marked haughtiness, more especially those who had helped him to the papal throne, and ignoring their reminders, boldly declared he meant to rule alone; that with God's assistance he felt strong enough to insure a good government. The people now viewed with astonishment the seemingly worn-out old man who had suddenly developed so much vigour and determination. His strongly lined face, his firm mouth, his small, but brilliant brown eyes, were those of a masterful man, born to command. Many emotions played upon his countenance; at one time kindness, even tenderness, and again his features hardened into severity. His complexion was swarthy, his cheeks high coloured, his cheek bones prominent; he wore his beard full and bushy — it was auburn in colour fast turning into gray; his whole person was impressive, imposing rather than majestic; there was nothing regal in his manner, but it was plainly evident that he was master.

Pope Sixtus had barely ascended the throne of St. Peter when it was felt that the reins of power were grasped by powerful hands. He made it clear at once that he was bent upon securing peace and good order in his dominions. The day after his

election, he summoned the conservators of the city to his presence and sternly bade them to see that justice was firmly administered. In an edict published before his coronation, he forbade the carrying of fire arms and visited the breach of this injunction with the extreme penalty of the law. Four young brothers were taken with arquebuses in their hands, tried, convicted and sentenced to death. As the coronation procession filed across the bridge of St. Angelo, it met the ghastly spectacle of these four corpses swinging in the air. It had been the custom on coronation day to throw open the prison gates and make a general gaol delivery. But when the governor of St. Angelo came to Sixtus seeking the usual permission, he was angrily rebuked and reminded that it was no affair of his, in the following words: " Pardons do not come within your scope ; acts of grace are my prerogative and now that I find my predecessor has left the judges idle for thirteen years, I intend to make up for his neglect. No one shall be released except by process of law. Let all prisoners be brought to speedy trial so that the prisons may be emptied of their present occupants and room made for others. I will not bare the sword in vain, but will execute judgment upon all wrong doers." He gave orders then that four of the most notorious offenders in St. Angelo should be tried and, if found guilty, publicly executed, two by the axe and two by the halter, on the occasion of his coronation. The col-

lege of cardinals vainly protested against this blood-thirsty proceeding, but the pope was inexorable.

Another incident may be quoted illustrating this pope's determined vindication of the penal law. One day when the streets were crowded to see the new pope as he passed, one of the Swiss guard, in clearing the road, unfortunately struck a Spanish gentleman who was a stranger in Rome. A little later this same soldier was on his knees before the altar in St. Peter's, when the Spaniard saw him and seizing a pilgrim's staff that lay at hand, struck the soldier so violent a blow on the head that he was killed immediately. The Spaniard took refuge in the Spanish ambassador's house. News of the murder reached the pope's ears and stirred him to take vigorous measures against the culprit. The governor of the city would have paused to enquire into the affair before taking action, but Sixtus would brook no delay; condign punishment must be meted out promptly. The governor pleaded that as the Spaniard was under the momentary protection of his ambassador, more circumspection should be shown. But the pope answered furiously, "This is no time for forms and ceremonies, I will have that Spaniard hanged before I sit down to dinner, and I shall dine early to-day."

Sixtus V was no doubt terribly in earnest and Rome trembled. He was determined to establish order and terrify all who had hitherto tyrannised over quiet and well disposed people. He insisted

that the police should take cognisance of all offences, and to make sure that the judges would do their duty, removed all of lenient disposition from the bench and replaced them by men of sterner stuff, not afraid to use the powers entrusted to them. His chief efforts were directed against brigandage, which had long been the scourge of the papal states. It was calculated that during the later years of Gregory's reign, the total number of bandits in active prosecution of their evil trade varied from 12,000 to 27,000 persons. The states of the Church were infested with organised bands, large and small, who terrorised and laid waste the country. They were well disciplined, well clothed, well armed and well led by reckless outlaws, many of them of good family who had quarrelled with authority and set the law absolutely at defiance. They drew their recruits from the entire criminal population; every village sent its contingent and the people generally were in close relations with the banditti, whom they supported and admired for their daring deeds and unbounded contempt for danger. They befriended and sided with the bandits against the soldiery sent in pursuit of them, for the bandits treated them well, while the soldiers robbed and ill-used them so that they were stigmatised as the "slaughterers," and thus the defenders of the public peace were more dreaded than its disturbers.

At this time, there were three principal brigand

chiefs, Piccolomini, Guercino and Lamberto Malatesta. The first was a nobleman, Duke of Monte Marciano, of an illustrious family in Sienna, which had given a pope, Pius II, to the pontificate. This highborn brigand was long the lord and master of the papal states and ravaged them from end to end. Sometimes he made descents on Rome; sometimes he raided the Romagna and the two Marches. He moved always with lightning-like rapidity, suddenly appearing before some stronghold, which he captured, forthwith putting its garrison to the sword. He generally beat off the troops sent against him, but if worsted skilfully made good his escape. Many stories were current of his misdeeds; the mere expression of his face framed in with long flowing hair struck terror to the hearts of his victims, but he treated the peasants kindly and was almost as much loved as feared by them. He threatened to carry his depredations into the very heart of Rome and declared he would hold the city at his mercy until reinstated in his confiscated possessions. Some sort of compromise was entered into by the pope, in Gregory's time, and although he did not recover his estates, he was bought off by the grant of a pension to his sisters.

Nothing could exceed the insolent boldness of the brigands when Sixtus assumed power. They came up to the very gates of Rome; indeed they entered the Holy City and often carried off people whom they took out of their beds. Outside, they



intercepted communications, stopped the mails and robbed messengers of the ambassadors. Sixtus waged war vigorously against them; he called upon the people in a bull, issued within a week of his election, to fly to arms when the alarm-bell rang and offer determined resistance. A price was set upon the heads of the leading brigands; full pardon was promised to any who would betray or kill their fellows. A new and more capable commander, Cardinal Colonna, headed the soldiers in attacking the banditti, who were driven off with great loss of life. Guercino, the priest, was among the slain. After this the smaller towns joined in the campaign, which was pursued with so much energy that by the end of the year the brigands were completely driven out of the Campagna.

After Piccolomini had retired into private life, Lamberto Malatesta became the most formidable leader. He also was a man of rank and belonged to the family of Rimini who had once reigned almost as sovereign princes. His operations were conducted on a large scale and with the utmost audacity. He ravaged Romagna, Umbria and the Marches; he attacked and took fortified castles; he scaled the walls of Imola, an important town in the Romagna, and was strongly backed by the grand-duke of Tuscany, with whom he found secure winter quarters and all necessary reinforcements. The pope was constrained to threaten the duke with war unless he withdrew his support from this

outrageous criminal. Sixtus spoke in the most indignant terms. "It astonishes me that you should tolerate a man who has been discarded by the Holy Church, that you should allow him to levy men in your states to the detriment of mine." He went on to threaten coercive measures unless Malatesta was at once given up to him. The grand-duke yielded with a good grace; arrested Malatesta and sent him to Rome, where his arrival caused great consternation and a general exodus of many secret supporters who dreaded the result of his revelations. No better proof could be afforded of the extent of Malatesta's nefarious operations and of the number of allies he had secured. It was said that at one time he had conceived the most ambitious schemes, — nothing less than the invasion of Italy by Protestant princes from the north and the overthrow of the papal power in Europe, in coöperation with his hordes of robbers. Sixtus made short work of this aristocratic criminal; he was put upon his trial, the suit was pressed forward and he was speedily condemned. Out of consideration for his family, the sentence of death passed upon him was carried out by decapitation on the battlements of St. Angelo. So efficacious were the uncompromising measures undertaken against brigandage that when barely two years had elapsed after the pope's election, it had practically ceased to exist.

Sixtus V was uniformly severe in the repression of all kinds of crime. He was, no doubt, by nature

cruel; he spared no one and punished wrong doing inexorably. A man of austere virtue, he condemned all immorality and would suffer no breaches of the law. His rule was harsh and unrelenting, but it extricated Rome from the old chaos of tumult and disorder. A long list might be made of the summary regulations he enforced for the good government of the city. He issued stringent laws against astrologers, fortune tellers, card sharpers and blasphemers; he obliged all ecclesiastics to appear with the tonsure and in the dress of their order; he threatened death to the news-mongers if they spread any report that ought to remain secret or might be prejudicial to the honour of private persons. In this connection it may be said that capital punishment was comparatively rare and reserved mostly for homicides after fair trial. Impunity for misconduct was no longer conceded to birth, position, connections or benefit of clergy. It was dangerous to make a joke of the law. Several youthful members of the best families, Orsini Sforza and Incoronati, dared to place cats' heads on pikes on the bridge of St. Angelo to ridicule some public execution, and they were all forthwith arrested, but escaped with a reprimand. The son of a cardinal, D'Altemps, was guilty of abduction, and despite the protests of his father, was seized and shut up in the castle of St. Angelo. Here he lay for four months under sentence of death, the proper penalty for his offence; and although the

sacred college resented the action, the pope long refused to forgive the offender, who was only released to oblige his uncle, a German of high rank, who came to Rome on purpose to plead his cause. Two servants of another cardinal, Sforza, quarrelled and blood was shed, but the offenders made their escape. Sixtus ordered the cardinal to give them up under pain of being locked up himself in St. Angelo. Another cardinal was arrested for disobeying the pope's orders, and when Cardinal de Medicis pleaded for him, Sixtus sharply reprovved him, declaring that he meant to be master both in Rome and in Christendom. The pope's arrogant demeanour naturally did not endear him to the cardinals and several of them would have no intercourse with the Vatican and attended neither the consistories nor the ceremonies of the Church.

A few more instances may be quoted to illustrate the punishment and condition of crime in the time of Pope Sixtus V. Very soon after his accession, the servant of the German ambassador was found wearing a sword, which was forbidden, and for which he was imprisoned and received three lashes. The diplomatic body was loudly indignant and insisted that the governor of Rome who had enforced the punishment should be called to account. But Sixtus positively refused to interfere and boldly declared that if one of the ambassadors themselves had been caught, he would have been equally punished for it; and more, that were the emperor to

come in person to Rome he should be compelled to obey the laws laid down by His Holiness. Another story is told of the time when brigandage was rampant. Count Giovanni Pepoli was the head of a great family in Upper Italy and a bandit had taken refuge at one of his castles in Bologna. The governor of the province called for his immediate surrender, but Count Pepoli refused, claiming that his castle was a fief of the German Empire. The governor attempted to lay forcible hands upon the brigand but failing in the attempt, caused the count himself to be arrested. The pope entirely approved of this summary act, and threatened the old count with death and confiscation unless he delivered up the bandit. The sturdy old nobleman still refused and sought the protection of the emperor in a letter, which was intercepted, and in which he had imprudently said that he counted upon being soon out of the hands of this monkish tyrant. Sixtus positively refused to spare the count, whom he charged with constant collusion with brigands and whom he said must pay the penalty. This was enforced by sentence of death and the count was accordingly strangled in prison. This severity was condemned by public opinion in Rome as excessive. "Everyone who knew this excellent nobleman feels horrified," wrote one of the cardinals. On the other hand, there were those who believed that this execution would tend to increase public security. It was no doubt an act of great boldness, for the

state of Bologna was disaffected. The Bolognese were a turbulent people and might be expected to rise in rebellion against the pope, but they lacked the courage to oppose Sixtus, who saw that he had struck a decisive blow which created a profound impression in Italy and beyond it.

The pope showed no mercy to his own order, and offending ecclesiastics were called to strict account. A friar who had imposed upon the credulity of the devout by pretending to work miracles with an image of the Virgin, was ignominiously paraded from one end of the Corso to the other, and then publicly flogged. A Franciscan, one of his own order, who had been guilty of many crimes, was hanged upon the bridge of St. Angelo. A clerical newsmonger was barbarously executed at the same place, having been first degraded and unfrocked. Before he died on the gibbet his hands were cut off and his tongue torn out. A list of his crimes were written on a board and hung over him; they included calumny of persons of all ranks, the dissemination of false news, and correspondence with heretical princes. A mother who had permitted her daughter to become the mistress of a noble, was hanged on the bridge of St. Angelo, and the girl dressed in rich clothes, the gift of her seducer, was forced to witness the execution. An impostor who had manufactured and disposed of false bulls was executed upon a gilded gibbet. The mere name Sixtus V inspired wholesome terror.

When quarrels and affrays occurred in the public streets, they were instantly quelled if the passers-by called out, "Remember that Sixtus V reigns." The pope was the universal bogey, and even mothers quieted their children by crying, "Hush! Sixtus is coming!"

This stern ruler had a long memory. The passage of the years brought no forgiveness for ancient and half forgotten offences. He cherished a vindictive feeling for many years against the murderer of his nephew Francesco Peretti, the unfortunate husband of that famous beauty, Vittoria Accoramboni. This crime had been perpetrated in the time of Gregory, when Sixtus was still Cardinal Montalto and held of small account. The reigning pope would take no proper action, and the real authors of the murder were screened; one was a man of the highest rank, an Orsini, Duke of Bracciano, with whom Gregory was afraid to interfere. A brief account of this most reprehensible affair may fitly be introduced here.

The Accoramboni were a noble family of Gubbio, in Umbria, the chief of which had married an ambitious Roman lady, who hoped to achieve a leading position in society through her daughter, one of the most fascinating women known to history. Her charms are amply set forth in contemporary records. She was singularly beautiful, had a quick wit and a cultivated mind, a sweet voice, with every natural gift and most attractive manners. Many suitors

came to pay her court, chief among them being Paolo Giordano Orsini, the above mentioned duke of Bracciano, whom she no doubt favoured, and who was distinctly acceptable to the mother in spite of his evil reputation. He was said to have strangled his first wife, Othello-like, in a fit of jealousy. He was also closely allied with the brigands whom he sheltered, both in Rome and in the provinces, where he had vast possessions. He was very stout, no longer young or handsome, and hardly the kind of man to captivate a woman. But he pleased Vittoria and being deeply in love would no doubt have married her except for Accoramboni, the father, who intervened, fearing some scandal, and gave his daughter to Francesco Peretti, of course an inferior, but by no means a bad match. The young couple came to live with Cardinal Montalto in the modest house near S. Maria Maggiore. They were fairly happy, but ill-matched. Vittoria was a fashionable lady, recklessly extravagant, devoted to social functions and the smartest clothes. She was an unconscionable flirt, many men were continually at her feet, and foremost among them was her old lover the duke. Family quarrels and dissensions were of constant occurrence, when one night Francesco was assassinated in the street, it was supposed by Marcello Accoramboni, his brother-in-law, with whom he had been last seen, but who had, no doubt, been incited to the murder by the duke of Bracciano. Montalto was overwhelmed



with grief, but got no redress from the pope, who merely ordered the prosecution of a person who had made a false confession of the crime and who was at a safe distance from Rome. There could be little doubt as to the chief instigator, for a few days later Vittoria ran away from the cardinal's house and sought the protection of the duke of Bracciano. Moved now by public indignation, the pope issued a warning ordering Vittoria to go home to her father and break with Orsini, whom she was forbidden to marry. All these orders were defied; she constantly visited the duke, and it was afterwards known that two distinct marriages between them took place about this time. But the pope vindicated his authority and sent the police to arrest Vittoria, and she was conveyed to the castle of St. Angelo, where she was imprisoned for nearly a year. The duke, however, who stood well at the court, managed to secure her enlargement, openly declaring that he had given up his idea of marrying the woman, who, as a matter of fact, was already his wife. A third marriage was solemnised at the very time of the election of Sixtus V.

It was now Montalto's turn; the murderers of Francesco Peretti might look at last for a sharp reckoning. The duke of Bracciano had not hesitated to pay homage to the new pope, although on his appearance at the Vatican he was received with a coldness that boded ill. Vittoria likewise had the effrontery to visit Camilla, the pope's sister and the

mother of her first husband. It was very plain to the Braccianos that their position in Rome was insecure and, escaping in the night, they fled into the country and eventually took refuge at Salo, in the territory of the Venetian republic. The matter slept for a time but was revived by the arrest of a servant of the duke's for another crime, who made many damaging allegations against his former master when on the rack. Now Donna Camilla implored her brother to avenge the murder of her son, and Sixtus V applied for the extradition of the duke of Bracciano. He had first perused all of the documents on the case, which had been deposited in the castle of St. Angelo, and was moved to fresh indignation. Death, however, removed the duke from the scene and Sixtus instead asked for Marcello Accoramboni, who was in prison at Padua for another offence. The Venetian senate demurred, but at length surrendered him, and Marcello was taken to Ancona where he was tried, convicted and executed.

Vittoria's fate was cruel, but perhaps not wholly undeserved. The duke, who died in her arms, had left her a large portion of his wealth, but at the mercy of the Orsini family. Ludovico, who was in the service of Venice, hurried to Salo and subjected Vittoria to much indignity, obliging her to surrender all her jewelry and valuables. She, foreseeing worse, fled to Padua and applied to her uncle-in-law for help and protection. Sixtus V had al-

ways liked her and willingly lent her his countenance in her poverty and distress, but it was too late. A number of armed miscreants broke into the palace, which she inhabited with her brothers, and murdered her when she was at her prayers. The crime was brought home to Ludovico, who stoutly resisted capture, but he was soon taken and the doge at once decided that he should lose his life. Three days afterward he was strangled in prison and his accomplices hanged on the public place of Padua.

The consolidation of peace and good order in his dominions was not the only boon conferred by Sixtus on his people. A motto ascribed to him, "Severity and the accumulation of riches," indicated the guiding principles of his reign. We have seen how he administered justice; I will now refer briefly to his wise financial policy.

The visitor to the castle of St. Angelo is shown the Treasure Chamber created by Sixtus. It is reached, after passing through the oil stores and the Cannon Ball Court, by a long narrow corridor from which open the so-called historical prisons, all of which are associated by tradition with some famous occupant. One is that known as the "Petroni," so-called after the wife of Francesco Cenci, the stepmother of the unhappy Beatrice; another is said to have been the resting place of Beatrice herself, and yet another the place of duration of Benvenuto Cellini. Cellini's cell still pre-

serves traces of a figure drawn in charcoal representing "Christ Triumphant," attributed to the famous artist's own hand, and there is internal evidence to show that this was the very cell from which he started on his memorable escape. After wrenching from its hinges the door which stood at the top of the steps, he made his way to a small platform, which projected from the keep in the form of a balcony, and lowered himself from this point by using the rope he had manufactured out of his sheets. We view these hideous cells with horror; they are dark and airless — the exact counterpart of mediæval dungeons — and we can enter into the feelings of their wretched inmates who languished there for years with little hope of release except by death. From the level of these prisons, we mount to the first floor of the papal apartments, and enter the hall named after Giulio Romano, and pass into a circular chamber, really in the very centre of the castle, which was the receptacle of the secret records and the papal treasury. Walnut wood shelves in the plain style of Paul III surround this chamber and it contains a number of huge boxes in oak, bound with iron and of immense strength. The largest of these was the cash box of Sixtus V, and in the smaller ones the crown jewels, the sceptres and tiaras and precious relics were preserved.

Sixtus V became the richest sovereign of the day; he was often heard to say that a king without

money was nobody, and he always had plenty ready to his hand. There were no means of borrowing in those days; only two public banks existed, those of Venice and Genoa, and neither of them lent money even on the most undeniable security. Any man, even the head of a state, if he wanted to lay his hand on specie must save it and put it by. Sixtus was wedded to economy, and the fruits thereof were deposited in St. Angelo. He bent every effort to gather in the rich harvest. He taxed his people heavily; imposed duties upon all articles of produce, even for a time upon wine, a most unpopular measure. His savings in due course amounted to vast sums; his deposit in the castle at the end of his reign was three million scudi in gold, and a million scudi in silver, all of which constituted a very solid backbone of wealth. Not that this implied a solid financial system; for the moneys thus hoarded were taken out of circulation and meant so much dead capital withdrawn from currency and useless in fostering commercial industry. Moreover, the taxation by which the pope gathered his funds together was undoubtedly burdensome and injurious to the people.

It is little likely that such a despotic ruler as Sixtus V would escape criticism; he was constantly lampooned and held up to ridicule in the manner dear to the witty Romans, but full of danger even when it was done anonymously. He was constantly exposed to satirical jests which were pasted

up on the statue called the Pasquino, the mutilated part of a great group representing Menelaus dragging the dead body of Patroclus from the walls of Troy. This statue stood against the walls of the Orsini palace close to the corner where another more splendid building, the Braschi palace, was afterwards built. This shapeless fragment was generally considered one of the noblest works of ancient art. A witty tailor, named Pasquino, at one time kept a shop nearly opposite the statue, which was nicknamed after him. The wits of the city frequented Pasquino's shop to interchange scandalous gossip and pungent jokes and the place became famous. When the street was repaired the statue was removed and was erected alongside the shop, and the custom was established of making it a sort of notice board; the epigrams pasted up were known as *pasquinata*, the origin of our word "pasquinade." This was early in the sixteenth century, from which time forth Pasquino became a name much dreaded and the vehicle of many bitter sayings. The government vainly tried to silence him and get rid of the statue. One pope, Adrian VI, who had been deeply offended by some sarcastic lines, would have thrown it into the Tiber, but a wise Spanish legate warned him to forbear lest the frogs in the river should learn to croak pasquinades. Another pope, Paul III, was asked by the statue how much he would give it to hold its tongue? A collection of the early pasquinades preserving a

great number of the epigrams is extant but exceedingly rare.

In one of the pasquinades Clement VII was told, "Papa non est errare;" the word *errare* having the double meaning, might be taken to imply that he claimed to be infallible and could not go wrong, or might refer to the fact that he was held a prisoner in St. Angelo by the constable of Bourbon, and could not wander at will.

Pasquino had a rival. There was a second statue, that called the Marforio, standing near the Capitol and used for the same purpose, chiefly in carrying on a dialogue in which people were criticised and sharply attacked. Thus Pasquin is asked why he is wearing a dirty shirt and he tells Marforio that he cannot get a clean one because Sixtus V had made his washerwoman a princess. The reference is to the pope's sister, Camilla, who had originally been a laundress. This libel greatly displeased the pope, who was very much attached to his relations, and he ordered a strict search to be made for its author. At last, after fruitless enquiry, Sixtus promised the writer a thousand pistoles and his life if he would come forward and give himself up; on the other hand, that if he were discovered by other means he should be hanged. The libellist, hungry for the reward, made full confession and then demanded the money, and, as promised, that his life should be spared. The pope was as good as his word; he handed over the money, but ordered that

the offender should have his hands cut off and his tongue bored through so as to curb his wit. "I only promised you your life," he said, "and you have got it, but you deserve punishment, not so much for having written the pasquinade, but for avowing it."

Another instance may be related of the ruthless severity with which Sixtus prosecuted offenders. In addition to the cases mentioned above, there was that of the parricide Count Attilio Baschi, who had killed his father forty years before and was now brought to trial, found guilty and executed. Many other criminals whose offences were all but forgotten, were also indicted and sentenced. This led to the composition of another pasquinade affixed to the beautiful statues of St. Peter and St. Paul, which are still standing at the entrance to the bridge of St. Angelo. St. Peter was given a bag which he carried on his back and St. Paul was made to ask why. "I am off on my travels," was St. Peter's reply; "if I stay here I expect to be prosecuted for having cut off the High Priest's ear." Again the pope's parsimony was ridiculed. Marforio asked Pasquino why he washed his linen on Sunday. "Because Sixtus is going to put the sun up at auction to-morrow," was the reply.

On the whole Sixtus V was a benefactor to his country; he restored peace and tranquillity to the papal states and the people enjoyed a prosperity hitherto unknown. The severe measures taken



were against wrong doers, the outlaws who committed crimes, the brigands in open warfare with the government, the members of great families at variance with one another who set law and order at defiance. At the same time while protecting the city, he beautified it and endowed it with many new works. He built bridges, constructed roads, founded the Vatican library and was a liberal patron of the arts. A notable instance of his charitable action was his gift of three thousand crowns to the funds collected for the redemption of Christian slaves captured by the Algerian pirates. He did much in a very brief space of time, for he reigned only five years and died suddenly with a strong suspicion that he had been poisoned.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE STORY OF THE CENCI

Francesco Cenci succeeds to the wealth amassed by his father, the papal treasurer — A man of vicious habits and ignoble passion — Hated by his family and his servants — Maltreats his daughters — Beatrice, the youngest, is courted by Guido Guerra — Francesco carries his family to a remote castle where he imprisons Beatrice in a dungeon — A plot is formed to kill him by the children, Guerra, and two of his servants — The deed is perpetrated — One of the servants confesses — Guerra absconds and the four Cenci are arrested — Horrible tortures inflicted to extort confession — Firmness of Beatrice — All are convicted — Pope Clement VIII is inclined to mercy — Another case of matricide forces him to make an example — Scaffold erected upon the bridge of St. Angelo — Terrible scenes at the execution — The Guido portrait of Beatrice — Descriptions by Charles Dickens and Nathaniel Hawthorne — Additions to St. Angelo — Executions of the day.

THE tragic romance of the Cenci is closely connected with the history of the castle of St. Angelo. Some of the principal performers in this terrible drama were long lodged there; they were subjected to cruel tortures within its gloomy walls, and expiated their crimes upon the bridge of St. Angelo close at hand.

Francesco Cenci in the year 1562 succeeded to the very considerable fortune amassed by his father, Monsignor Cristoforo Cenci, who had been

papal treasurer in the reign of Pius V. He was not in priest's orders, although a canon of St. Peter's, and he had married one Beatrice Arias, who had already borne him this only son. Francesco in early youth gave signs of a vicious disposition. When only eleven years of age he had been tried for murderous assault and had been guilty of many other crimes. He was a tall, stalwart, overbearing person, both hated and feared within his own house and beyond it. He constantly oppressed his servants, who sued him in the courts. He ill-used his wife abominably, and she died early after bearing twelve children, only seven of whom survived.

Five popes had come to the pontificate between Pius V and Clement VIII, in whose reign the celebrated case of the Cenci occurred. In 1593 Francesco Cenci took a second wife, by name Lucrezia Petroni, a woman of great piety, with whom he led a tempestuous life. He was a wicked and neglectful father whose family led a wretched existence, ever the prey of his unbridled passions. He pursued his eldest daughter with his ignoble attentions, but she successfully repulsed him and appealed for protection to the pope, who rescued her from her father's violence and gave her in marriage to a gentleman of Gubbio, with a suitable dower extorted from her father. The atrocious Francesco showed ever increasing animosity toward his children, who, although full grown, he detained as close prisoners

in the Cenci palace, while he transferred his attentions to Beatrice, his youngest daughter, now a maiden of eighteen, possessing many attractions, and whose beautiful face is familiar to all the world from the well known portrait by Guido still preserved in the Barberini Palace.

Poor Beatrice suffered many barbarities at her inhuman father's hands. Fearing that she would appeal, like her sister, to the pope, he kept her constantly locked up and frequently beat her. With the connivance of her stepmother, she contrived to send a petition to the pope, but the holy father declined to be friendly. About this time a young priest, Guido Guerra, who had not as yet taken the vows, fell in love with Beatrice and she returned his affection, but Francesco Cenci altogether disapproved of the attachment and drove Guido Guerra away, furiously threatening to kill him if he dared to reopen communications with the family. Guerra after this tried to carry Beatrice off, but failed and further exasperated her father, who now abruptly left Rome, removing with his family to the castle of Petrella, a remote mountain stronghold near Aquila, on the frontier of the Neapolitan states, where he held Beatrice a close prisoner in a dark dungeon. But the measure of his iniquities was nearly full, and dire retribution was at hand.

Maddened by his ill-usage, his wretched victims plotted to compass his death. Giacomo Cenci, the eldest son, joined with Guido Guerra, Beatrice's

lover, and with two hired assistants found among Francesco's vassals — all of whom loathed their inhuman master — the manner of the murder was quickly arranged. Francesco was first drugged with opium by his wife Lucrezia, and when sleeping soundly the assassins approached him, but hesitated to strike while he was thus unconscious. Beatrice had followed them into his room and upbraiding them for their cowardice, declared that she would do the deed herself. When at last they fell to their murderous work, they despatched Francesco by driving a nail through his temples. The corpse was then dressed, carried out to an open gallery and thrown down upon the branches of an elder tree growing in the garden below. It was thought that when the body was found next day it would be supposed that the dead man had fallen from the gallery in the dark. This was the charitable conclusion arrived at. No suspicion was expressed of foul play; the two women Lucrezia and Beatrice lamented loudly and after a brief period of mourning, the family returned to Rome.

Several months passed before justice intervened. The story of accidental death began to be doubted. The Neapolitan authorities communicated with the Roman, inquiries were set on foot and the theory of murder was first broached, being justified presently by the medical evidence forthcoming on the disinterment of the corpse. Guerra, the priest, becoming alarmed, tried to put the servants, who had

actually committed the crime, beyond giving evidence by taking their lives. One indeed was killed, the other escaped but surrendered himself and made full confession. The case was now clear against the Cenci family as well as Guido Guerra, who fled across the frontier disguised as a charcoal burner. At this point the two brothers, Giacomo and Bernardo, were imprisoned in the Corte Savella, the common gaol, while Beatrice and Lucrezia were detained in the Cenci palace in Rome. The servant who had been arrested in Naples was brought to Rome for examination, but would not implicate Beatrice, who had been persistent in her denial, declaring that so beautiful a girl was incapable of a crime. This servant was put to torture and died upon the rack, after which all the accused were committed to St. Angelo and finally removed to the Corte Savella where the criminal court of justice then sat. The judge had such presumption of their guilt that, failing to extort confession, he ordered the "question" to be applied.

When subjected to the "cord" the brothers' courage failed. This was torture by means of a rope attached to the arms and rove into a running knot with a pulley in the ceiling. When run up, the whole weight of the body was borne by the arms which were nearly drawn from their sockets. Then the *squasso* was tried, a sudden drop of the body, but not so far as to touch the floor. The brothers stood out at first but were told their sufferings

would be increased by the addition of lead weights to their feet. Then they gave in and admitted the crime but laid the chief blame on Beatrice as the instigator. Lucrezia being aged and corpulent was not tried with the cord.

Beatrice, however, would not yield to either the persuasion or threats of the judge. She bore the torment of the "cord" with extraordinary firmness. Torture failed to extort a single word from her. The judge saw in this no obstinacy but a proof of innocence, which he duly reported to the pope. Clement VIII, believing the judge to be swayed by the prisoner's great beauty, gave the case to another, made of sterner stuff, one Luciani, a man of cruel character. When Beatrice persisted in declaring her innocence, he ordered the torture of the *vigilia* to be continued with full severity for five hours.

The *vigilia* is a narrow stool with a high back having a seat cut into pointed diamonds. The sufferer sits crosswise and the legs are fastened together on either side without support. The body is closely attached to the back of the chair, which is also cut into angular points. The hands are bound behind the back with a cord and running knot attached to the ceiling. The process of the torture is to push the victim from side to side against the points, run the body up and drop it perpetually the whole of the time ordered. The first infliction failed of effect and it was repeated on the third day.

Beatrice was almost exhausted, but she still declined to confess, and the next stage in the devilish business was that of the torture of the hair, *capillorum*.

In this the hair of the head is twisted into a knot and attached to a rope and pulley by which the body is raised until it hangs by the hair. At the same time the fingers are imprisoned in a mesh of thin cord which is tightened and twisted till they are out of joint. Beatrice continued to protest her innocence and the judge could only conclude that she was supported by witchcraft. The story is too painful to carry further, and I forbear to describe the *tavillo*, or application of a block of heated wood fastened to the soles of the bare feet. At last her brothers and stepmother were brought in to make piteous entreaty to the poor victim to yield, till she cried, "Let this martyrdom cease and I will confess anything." She went on to declare: "That which I ought to confess; that I will confess; that to which I ought to assent, to that I will assent, and that which I ought to deny, that will I deny." She was accordingly convicted without direct confession and she never really admitted her crime.

The pope, Clement VIII, now ordered that all four should be dragged through the streets, tied to the tails of horses, and then decapitated. But many great people interceded on their behalf, praying that they might first be heard in their defence, and the pope at last reluctantly consented to listen to their advocates, whom he roundly abused, telling them



that he was surprised at their effrontery in daring to defend the unnatural crime of parricide. But one of the most eminent jurists of his time, Prospero Farinacci, whose portrait is still to be seen in the castle of St. Angelo painted on one of the doors of the great hall, expatiated so eloquently upon the cruel wrongs Francesco Cenci had inflicted upon his family that Clement was moved to pity and spent a whole night in pondering over the arguments put forward by the defence. Next day he granted a reprieve, and it appeared more than likely that he would extend a full pardon to all. But at this moment another murder, a matricide in a princely family of Rome, shocked all society, and the pope insisted that justice should take its course upon all the Cenci and that all should suffer death except the entirely innocent son, Bernardo, who was, however, condemned to witness the execution of the other three.

The sentence was carried out on the ridge of St. Angelo just in front of the castle, the convicts having spent their last hours at the Corte Savella. Only a short notice was given them; they were warned one morning at six o'clock that they were to be executed on the same day. Beatrice, on hearing her fate, burst into piteous lamentations, crying, "Is it possible, O, God! that I must die so suddenly?" Her stepmother was more resigned and strove to calm Beatrice. The priests came to confess them and administer the last sacrament, after which

they were led forth to join the funeral procession, which had started from St. Angelo, traversing the city to the Cenci Palace, and, after stopping for the condemned at the Corte Savella, returning to the bridge. Giacomo was in the first cart, as he was to be the first to expiate his crime. The sentence imposed upon him included the additional torture of being torn with red hot pincers as he passed along the road to the bridge, where he was to be beaten to death. Bernardo was in the second cart and Lucrezia with Beatrice in the third. The ladies were dressed wholly in black and veiled to the girdle, to which was fastened a silken cord binding their wrists, instead of manacles. On reaching the scaffold, Bernardo mounted it and was left there alone while the ladies entered the chapel. The poor youth, ignorant of the favour shown him, believed he was to suffer death at once, and he fainted just opposite the block. Lucrezia came out first and was beheaded while repeating a psalm. Beatrice followed and bravely walked to the scaffold reciting her prayers, "with such fervour of spirit that all who heard her shed tears of compassion." With her lovely fair hair she looked like a sad but beautiful angel. She would have lingered at her prayers but the executioner seized her, and struck ferociously at her neck, the head falling into her own blood. Bernardo meanwhile, awakening from his deadly swoon, again fainted when he saw these horrible sights and was thought to be dead until

revived by powerful remedies which were applied. Last of all Giacomo was brought out, blindfolded; his legs were tied to the scaffold and the executioner struck him a fatal blow on the temples with a loaded hammer and then cut off his head. After the ceremony Bernardo was taken back to the castle of St. Angelo and kept there for a year and a half, then exiled to Tuscany, where he died.

The foregoing narrative follows the facts as stated in the archives of the Cenci family, but some authorities question whether Beatrice was ever imprisoned and tortured in St. Angelo. The evidence however seems perfectly clear. The cells she and her mother occupied are still shown, as mentioned above, and in her will Beatrice, who left the larger part of her possessions to the Church, also bequeathed money to four soldiers of the garrison who had probably been her guards in the castle. Doubts are to-day expressed as to the authenticity of the famous portrait which is attributed to the eminent painter Guido, who, according to the story, was introduced by her lawyer Farinacci into her cell for the purpose. The personal description of Beatrice given in the Cenci documents does not tally with the picture. She is recorded to have been "small and of a fair complexion with a round face, two dimples in her cheeks and golden, curling hair, which being extremely long she used to tie up; and when afterwards she loosened it the splendid ringlets dazzled the eyes of the spectators. Her

eyes were of a deep blue, pleasing and full of fire, and her face was so smiling in character that even after her death she still seemed to smile." On the other hand in the Guido canvas the eyes are hazel, the hair is not long or curling, the face is drawn with thin and haggard cheeks and no dimples. It is in the highest degree improbable that she would have worn such a head-dress or costume at the time the portrait is said to have been taken, and even the suggested solution that it was painted from recollection is not borne out by any sort of proof. The portrait is on view to-day in the Barberini Palace in Rome, having come into the possession of that noble family from another of Colonna.

The poetic traditions that have been woven around this marvellous painting have inspired much fine writing by famous hands. Some of the most interesting passages may be transcribed here.

"The portrait of Beatrice," says Charles Dickens, "is a picture almost impossible to be forgotten. Through the transcendant sweetness and beauty of the face there is a something shining out that haunts me. I see it now as I see this paper or my pen. The head is loosely draped in white, the light hair falling down below the linen folds. She has turned suddenly toward you, and there is an expression in the eyes — although they are very tender and gentle — as if the wildness of a momentary terror or distraction had been struggled with and overcome that instant; and nothing but a celestial hope and a beau-

## Reverend (1911)

From the ... by ...  
In the ...

The very saddest picture ...  
Richard ...  
of a ...  
of St. ...  
and ...  
front of the ...



tiful sorrow and a desolate earthly helplessness remained."

Again, Nathaniel Hawthorne has written:—  
"The picture of Beatrice Cenci is the very saddest picture ever painted or conceived; it involves an unfathomable depth of sorrow, the sense of which comes to the observer by a sort of intuition. She knows that her sorrow is so strange and immense that she ought to be solitary for ever, both for the world's sake and her own; and this is the reason we feel such a distance between Beatrice and ourselves, even when our eyes meet hers. It is infinitely heart-breaking to meet her glance and to know that nothing can be done to help or comfort her; neither does she ask help or comfort, knowing the hopelessness of her case better than we do. She is a fallen angel — fallen and yet sinless."

Further additions were made to St. Angelo in the seventeenth century, in improving its interior and strengthening its defences. Urban VIII in 1623 built the bastions, still standing, and restricted the bed of the Tiber so as to put an end to the inundations that so often had done great damage to this part of the city. The pope also improved the armament of the castle and cast many pieces of cannon with the bronze he removed from the roof of the Pantheon. He was of the Barberini family, whose crest is a bee, and a contemporary writer, the Jesuit Donato, paid Urban the compliment of saying that "bees not only make honey but possess stings to

be used in self-defence." The expenditure on the new guns amounted to 67,260 scudi; there were 110 pieces in all, described as "*Colubrini, cannoni, falconetti, petardi ed altri stromenti.*" It was in carrying out these works and excavating a new ditch that the Barberini or so-called "Sleeping Faun" was unearthed from the spot where it had lain since the sixth century.

Pope Urban VIII also improved the long corridor or passage that connected the Vatican with the castle. Arches had been added by Pius IV in 1559, and then Urban roofed it in. This gallery had two stories, the lower enclosed and tunnel-like, lighted by loopholes and a perfectly secure passageway, and the upper a covered loggia of open arches, as it may be seen to this day. The keys of these vitally important passages have always been retained by the pope himself in his own keeping.

From this time forth the castle of St. Angelo ceased to be a courtly residence, but it was still valued as a strong place of arms, with fortifications to be jealously guarded, improved and kept in good repair. It was also applied to baser uses as a prison-house to receive the many law-breakers and criminals constantly committed to safe custody by the watchful guardians of good order and the merciless agents of a severe penal code. The popes, secure in their authority, their power no longer challenged, held the turbulent people in stern subjection and enforced the law with a strong hand. Good order



was strictly maintained and offenders were promptly brought to punishment. Crime was extraordinarily prevalent and called for pitiless repressive and coercive measures.

It has been said that the determining factor in the execution of the Cenci was the occurrence of another murder of the same description. Paolo, a son of the Princess Santa Croce, had vainly sought to persuade his mother to make him her heir, but she had steadfastly refused, and in his rage and disappointment he resolved to kill her. He first wrote to a brother, Onofrio, accusing her of disgracing the family by her debauched life, obviously a false charge, for she was already more than sixty years of age. Onofrio replied that the honour of the family must be preserved at all costs. Whereupon Paolo stabbed his mother to the heart. Rome was convulsed, and Paolo fled for his life, but Onofrio was seized, put on his trial, convicted and executed on the bridge of St. Angelo in 1601.

A strange crime is recorded in the account of the beheading of a certain Giacinto Centini, who was a nephew of the most excellent and reverend Signor Cardinal d'Ascoli, and "who had caused a statue of wax to be made of Urban VIII, in order that its dissolution might insure that of the pope and so allow his uncle a chance of becoming pontiff at the next conclave." Included with this is the story of the recantation and death of his accomplices in the Campo di Fiore. It was on Sunday, April

22, 1636, that the recantation took place in St. Peter's in the presence of about twenty thousand persons. A platform ten spans high had been erected in the middle of the church, and the accused were made to mount upon it and listen to an account of the charges against them, which were read aloud from a neighbouring pulpit. Centini and one of his confederates, Fra Cherubino d'Ancona, heard in silence, but another, Fra Bernardino the Hermit protested so loudly that he was innocent and caused such scandal among the congregation that he was gagged to prevent further utterance. The two unhappy monks were then hurried to the Transpontina, where they were publicly stripped of their habit in the presence of a large crowd which attended them, hooting and shouting, and taken back to the Corte Savella where Centini had already arrived.

The execution was to take place in the Campo di Fiore and here the block and axes, and a stake firmly planted in the ground, and surrounded with straw and faggots, had been duly prepared. Long before dawn the square began to fill with people, and about eight in the morning the officers of justice left the prison with their victims, and after making a long tour through the city, reached the piazza. The pile was lighted immediately, and commenced to burn with such fury that the crowd drew back appalled from the consuming flames and the showers of sparks which darted from it. The ex-monks were in a state of abject terror and one of them fell

to the ground in a dead faint. Centini was beheaded first, then the two monks were hanged, and the bodies of all three were flung into the flames. They died with satisfactory signs of penitence and Cherubino especially, remarks the old chronicler, "made a most edifying end and left behind a good hope of his salvation."

No pains were spared to induce criminals about to die to seek reconciliation with Mother Church. An account is preserved of the last days of the "most illustrious and excellent Signor Protomedico Giovanni Tomasini," during the pontificate of Alexander VII in 1666. Together with a certain Camillo Nicoli, he had committed murder, and they lay under sentence of death in the Carceri Nuovi of Florence. Certain members of the Compagnia della Misericordia, a religious confraternity vowed to good works, were despatched to minister to the condemned men and attend them to the scaffold. Nicoli showed satisfactory signs of repentance, but Tomasini's heart was "as hard as the nether millstone" and he refused to prepare himself for death. He would not open his lips except to complain of the injustice of his sentence and nothing would move him, neither prayers, exhortations, litanies nor the telling of beads. Tomasini swore he would please himself and go to perdition his own way. The brethren in attendance wrestled with him, wept and kissed his feet, but failed utterly; others replaced them and were equally unsuccessful; the

execution was postponed to allow two eloquent Capuchin fathers assisted by two Carmelite friars to effect his conversion. Being still obdurate he was taken to hear mass; the priest who officiated especially addressed himself to Tomasini, but the celebrated physician remained as hardened as ever; he refused to kneel but sat himself astride of the bench and would not even turn his eyes to the altar. At last, exasperated beyond measure, the priests and the monks and brethren of the confraternity, attacked him, hustled him, abused him and hit him with no more result than that of creating a scandal in the Church. The executioner's assistants then gagged him and placed a rope round his neck, after which he heard another mass and was exorcised as though he had the devil inside him. All at once he heaved a deep sigh, tore the gag from his mouth and recanted his errors, to the immense relief of the members of the confraternity gathered around him. They took him back to the prison to confess and receive the last sacrament, after which he was again brought out, carefully dressed, and marched through the streets, singing a penitential psalm until he arrived at the scaffold.

These confraternities were corporate bodies with both religious and civil functions. Thus the Confraternita della Trinita lodged and fed gratuitously for three days all the pilgrims who came to Rome; the Confraternita della Morte attended to the sick in the vast Agro Romano; the Confraternita di St.

Giovanni Decollato devoted itself to prisoners condemned to death; the Santissima Annunziata gave dowries to poor and deserving Roman maidens; the brethren of the Stigmata of St. Francis prostrated themselves to kiss the ground and were therefore called in Roman slang *bacia mattoni*; <sup>1</sup> those of St. Girolamo della Carita begged alms for the prisoners; the Agonizzanti affixed the placards or *tavolette* on the walls which bore the names of malefactors sentenced to death; they besought the prayers of the pious and exposed the sacrament until the last penalty of the law was carried out.

Among the many privileges enjoyed by these confraternities till a much later date was one hardly in accordance with our modern idea of civil justice, "the right of liberating from the galleys, and even from sentence of death, any malefactors other than thieves." When negotiations had been entered into with the governor of Rome, and the pope's consent had been gained to the release of the offender, a day was fixed upon for the confraternity to march in solemn procession from its church to the prison, where the criminal was handed over and conducted in triumph round the city, dressed in the attire of the brotherhood and crowned with laurel, as in a Roman triumph. This custom was definitely abolished by Leo XII.

All these liberations, however, cost money, and in time there came to be an official tariff, varying

<sup>1</sup> "*Mattone*" signifies literally "an arrant fool."

according to the nature of the crime. Thus we read in a report of the Austrian legation that forty scudi sufficed to free a man who had been condemned to the galleys for ten years. The last criminal released by the Compagnia di S. Girolamo was a murderer named Checco sentenced to death in 1824. The company went in solemn procession to fetch him from the Carceri Nuove and conduct him to their church in the Via Monserrato. Here, after assisting at mass, he was arrayed in the habit of the confraternity, crowned with laurel and escorted in another triumphal procession round the church.

Terrible scenes were enacted at executions in those days. The story of the execution of Abbé Rivarola in 1668, found guilty of writing libellous satires, throws into strong relief the mad passions into which the Roman populace were constantly betrayed, and the terrible mental tortures inflicted upon the unhappy victims of the law. The abbé was so overcome by the terrors of the situation that in spite of all that could be done to keep up his courage and all the restoratives that were administered to him during the night preceding his execution, he had hardly strength enough left to be taken in a cart to the fatal place where he was to suffer. He was dragged up on the scaffold by the members of the confraternity in attendance on him, but so limp and powerless had he become that the executioner had the greatest difficulty in adjusting his head upon the block. Even then he must have

moved almost unconsciously, for when the string was pulled and the axe fell, it hit the wretched man between the neck and the shoulder. The executioner, seeing what had happened, seized a huge knife and literally hacked off his head, whereupon the bystanders leaped in wild rage upon the scaffold and with shrieks that rent the air seized the clumsy executioner, and would have torn him limb from limb had not the *sbirri* (policemen) hastened to his rescue. A free fight ensued which was only put an end to by the arrival of soldiers from the castle of St. Angelo. The executioner was flogged round the streets of Rome the following morning, and then exiled from the papal states.

Another gruesome picture of a public execution, at a somewhat later date, is described by an eyewitness in the following words:

“There was a sudden noise of trumpets in an adjoining street which somewhat diverted the attention of the populace, and presently there emerged into the Via Papala, from the Governo Vecchio, a procession headed by the Bargello and his officers and conveying two rogues bound upon asses to the Campo di Fiori, where they were to be exposed in the pillory. An immense mob followed these unhappy wretches, scoffing and sneering at them and pelting them with all manner of horrible refuse. The first criminal looked like a *facchino* or porter, and was very scantily clothed. His feet were bare and he wore a pair of breeches that barely came

below his thighs; on his head he had a cardboard mitre with devils and flames rudely painted upon it; his face was smeared all over with honey, and from his neck hung a card on which was written in large letters his name and these words: 'Blasphemer of the Holy Name of God.' A piece of wood was thrust into his mouth and tied behind at the nape of his neck in such a manner that he was obliged to keep his lips wide open and his tongue hanging out. This torture was called the *mordacchia*. Behind him walked the executioner's assistant, who administered repeated blows with a heavy whip to the culprit's back. The face of this latter was livid with pain and rage, and he glanced occasionally over his shoulders at his assailant, with an expression that plainly said: 'Wait until I am free, and then see what I will do to you!'

Another description comes from the same source:

"On one side of the piazza, between the fountain of Bernini and that of the Calderai there was a little table, on which a Jesuit missionary mounted at intervals and, crucifix in hand, harangued the bystanders, exhorting them to repent of their sins and amend their evil lives, — with very little apparent result, it must be confessed. On the opposite side of the piazza, a platform had been erected on which three criminals, who had been condemned to punishment, were exposed to the gibes and jeers of the public. Each one was bound to a bench and bore round his neck a huge placard upon which was



written his name and the misdemeanour for which he suffered. Thus one had been convicted of using false weights and measures; the second of having bought up certain kinds of provisions so as to raise their price; the third of being a pickpocket. But this exhibition, which was intended to serve as a warning to evildoers, was only an additional amusement for the populace.

“Suddenly the sound of a trumpet was heard and the crowd rushed in the direction whence it proceeded. It was the public crier, who announced that their time of punishment in the pillory being over, the three criminals would further be subjected to the lash. Immediately two inferior officials mounted the platform; laid the culprits face downwards on the bench and bound them to it, while the executioner administered twenty-five strokes to the backs of the two first with a scourge made of strips of skin. The victims screamed and writhed under the lash, but their shrieks were drowned in the applause of the crowd, who gloated over their sufferings in a truly horrible manner. The third, a young man, pale and emaciated-looking, was to receive fifty stripes, the maximum number allowed by law, and which was usually given only to thieves.”

“Again, in 1711, a man was beheaded in the Campo di Fiore and his body burned for having passed himself off as a priest. On June 26, 1717, Antonio Castellani, aged twenty-two, shared the same fate for having stolen a cloak, which he sold

again for about a shilling; and in 1734, an old man of seventy-two, Marcantonio Troiani, was arrested for cattle-stealing. This latter was a noted thief but he hoped, by spontaneously confessing his guilt, to escape with perhaps a few years of the galleys. Instead of this, he was condemned to death. Furious at his sentence, he determined that he would not allow himself to be converted. He was, therefore, morally tortured by the members of the confraternity to begin with; and when this did not succeed, they applied, first, liquid wax, and then plates of red-hot iron to his person. This torture also failed, and then the executioner, after brutally ill-using him, put a halter round his neck and made as though he would strangle him; and the terrified old man, scarcely knowing whether his tormentor were man or devil, consented to recommend his soul to the tender mercies of Christ."

In the lawless state of society prevailing, such scenes were frequent. It was not criminals only who suffered these punishments. "The State officials and officers of justice were also liable to suffer severe penalties unless they exercised a due discretion in the carrying out of their duties. There is an incident on record which shows this very plainly. One day two of the *sbirri* out on the Campagna Romana saw a travelling carriage coming from the direction of Frascati. They stopped it, according to custom, and demanded to see the passports of its occupants. Unfortunately for the

zealous officers, the travellers chanced to be the Duke of Sermoneta and his family, and he was so affronted at the request that he instantly complained to the governor of Rome, Monsignor Potenziani. Proceedings were taken against the *sbirri*, and although they had evidently not exceeded their just powers, they were bound upon asses and flogged through the streets of the city with these words inscribed on cards round their necks:— '*Per mancanza grave nell' ufficio di esploratore.*'" (For grave dereliction of duty in their office of scout.)

It required very little in those barbarous times to bring a man to the gallows. On the first Sunday of the Carnival of 1720, the Abbé Gaetano Volpini da Piperno, a young man of twenty-two, was executed for having written a libel against Pope Clement XI, whom he accused of improper intimacy with Queen Clementina Sobieski, the wife of James III, the English Pretender. This document was never even printed but it was circulated in manuscript in Vienna, and unfortunately came under the observation of the papal nuncio, Monsignor Spinola, who denounced the author to the pope. Although the scandal was notorious, the wretched abbé was transferred to Rome, where he pined for some time in a loathsome dungeon, and was finally beheaded.

In another case the inditing and publication of the libel was not essential to constitute the crime. One Camillo Zaccagni, a well known literary man of his time, was beheaded near the bridge of St.

Angelo, because, after vainly imploring the release of his nephew imprisoned at the instance of Monsignor Pallavicino, he was heard to say, in a barber's shop, that "the inhuman prelate had used language that would not be employed even in Turkey" and that he, Camillo, would be revenged on him when the papal chair became vacant. The laws against libel were very severe and found a prominent place in the criminal code. One published by the secretary of state ran as follows:—"And whereas it is manifest to every one how grave are the evils which arise from public or injurious libels, His Eminence, anxious to prevent them, orders that no person shall dare to compose, write, affix, or cause to be affixed, distribute or give away any libels or pasquinades of any sort—even though they may expound or set forth the truth;—or copy, or preserve any such, under pain of death, confiscation of goods and perpetual infamy, according to the rank of the offender, or at least of the galleys, at the pleasure of His Eminence." Such was the temper of the time which persisted long after the terrible period of the Inquisition in Rome, whose cruelties long exercised a powerful influence upon criminal procedure.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ROMAN INQUISITION

Popes having consolidated their spiritual dominion in Christendom aim at complete temporal power — Inquisition originated by Pope Innocent III — His character — Inquisition grows into engine of the most cruel intolerance — Annals of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries full of conflicts between Inquisition and civil authorities in various states of Europe — Spanish bishop imprisoned in St. Angelo for life on charge of heretical belief in Mahometan tenets — Advent of Protestant Reformation and the new Inquisition, "The Supreme and Universal," established at Rome in 1542 — In pontificate of Paul IV prisons of the Inquisition full to overflowing — Dr. Wylson, an English Catholic, narrowly escapes — A Franciscan friar barbarously punished for heretical opinions — Carnesecchi put to death — Giordano Bruno, one of the most celebrated philosophers of his day, burned alive — Arrest and trial of Galileo, the eminent astronomer — His release — The remarkable story of the Archbishop of Memphis — His imprisonment — Later discoveries of the tortures perpetrated — The bath of slaked lime.

THIS account of Italian prisons must now revert to a much earlier date, when the so-called crime of religious error moved the supreme authority to establish a special tribunal to cope with it, having extensive penal powers. In other words, the Inquisition was created. Toward the end of the twelfth century the popes had consolidated their spiritual do-

minion in Christendom and aimed at complete temporal sway; the papal authority was recognised by kings, bishops, clergy and the laity of all degrees; the holy father claimed the power to forgive sins and the right to punish sinners. The popes had achieved by perseverance and astute diplomacy a paramount position; they ruled wide territories in Italy and enjoyed princely revenues gathered in from all sources. They aspired now to impose orthodoxy of belief, feeling that dissent from established forms might lead to resistance and rebellion against papal supremacy and the authority of the Church. Heresy was the beginning of treason; it must be sought out unceasingly and sternly repressed. The principles of the Reformation were foreshadowed long before its birth, and already brave men dared to worship in their own way and claimed independence of religious belief. The extirpation of heresy among the Albigenses, the Waldenses, and the Patarines<sup>1</sup> was the avowed object of the cruel measures of the originator of the Inquisition, Pope Innocent III, and of the religious persecutions which for centuries decimated and disgraced Christendom.

Innocent III, who was of the family of the Conti, became pope in 1198. Historians of his own way

<sup>1</sup>The Italian Patarini were married priests and their followers, who are sometimes confounded with the Waldenses, with whom they sympathised, at least in the conviction that compulsory celibacy was unlawful.

of thinking speak of him in terms of almost fulsome eulogy. He is described as, "a man of clear understanding and retentive memory; he excelled in divine and human learning, spoke well in common Italian and in Latin, sang songs and psalms well, was of middle stature and commanding aspect. He preserved the mean between prodigality and avarice; but gave away alms and food liberally, although sparing in other respects, except in cases of necessity. Severe toward the rebellious and contumacious, but kind to the humble and devout; brave and constant, magnanimous and astute; a defender of the faith and an assailant of heresy; in justice rigid, and in mercy pious; humble in prosperity, and patient in adversity; in temper somewhat irascible, yet easily forgiving."

As he was the earliest, so he was the chief and foremost of the persecutors. On the day of his election he announced that he meant to unsheath "the sword of Peter" and pursue all heretics unsparingly. One of his first acts was to circulate letters apostolic among the bishops, calling upon them to help and encourage the two travelling "inquisitors" whom he was about to despatch from Rome, who were to investigate and call all heretics to account in France, Spain and Portugal. If any, after admonition, hesitated to repent them of their evil opinions, they were to be excommunicated; the property of offending men of rank was to be confiscated, sentence of banishment passed upon them,

and if they still remained in the country, graver penalties were to be imposed. No one might hope to escape discovery; his emissaries were to penetrate all districts, even the most remote, to hunt out and repress the slightest heresies. How the Inquisition, once started, grew into an engine of the most cruel intolerance, wreaking vengeance upon thousands of victims, inflicting almost inconceivable tortures and death by the most barbarous methods, was seen in its most extreme development in Spain.

We have to deal here with the doings of the Inquisition in Italy, and more particularly in Rome, where Innocent III, consumed with fervid zeal, made all Romish bishops inquisitors by virtue of their office, to execute justice upon all heretics they might find in their dioceses. The summary action taken against heretics is seen in a decree which was promulgated by the pope which ordered: "Every heretic, especially a Patarino, found in the patrimony of St. Peter to be seized instantly and summarily delivered to the secular court to be punished according to law. All his property to be forfeited, and one-third given to the person who caught him, another to the court that punished him, and a third to be employed in public works; his house to be demolished and never built again but made a dunghill; his friends to be fined, one-fourth of their property to be given to the state for the first offence, and to be banished for the second; such persons to have no power of appeal in any cause nor



any right to take proceedings, but to be prosecuted by whomsoever chooses."

The zeal and activity of the new Inquisition was greatly stimulated when the order of the Dominican monks became generally charged with its proceedings. A Spanish priest, Domingo de Guzman, commonly known as St. Dominic, who came to Rome just as the new pope Honorius III was elected, founded the fraternity of the Dominicans, and this order was specially entrusted with the "affairs of faith against heretics." The Dominican inquisitors were appointed to further the cause in several great Italian cities, in Florence, Genoa and Venice, but the rule of tyranny and bloodshed they inaugurated was in many places strongly opposed. Pope Alexander IV backed and supported them, and with many fierce bulls strengthened their powers. Some historians believe that the inquisitors did much to establish the papal power in Italian states, and it is said that these guardians of the true faith frequently laid their hands upon political opponents and proceeded against all kinds of wrong-doers. The Inquisition, in any case, persecuted astrologers, necromancers, alchemists and wizards. The higher science of astronomy had an evil name and the greatest astronomers, as we shall presently see in the case of Galileo, were arraigned and tried for their lives.

The annals of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are full of the conflicts that raged between

the Inquisition, or its agents, and the civil authorities in the various states of Europe, especially the Italian states, all of which were constantly at enmity and in conflict one against the other. The papacy was at war with the German Empire, to which some reference has already been made. The Inquisitors were, naturally, ranged on the papal side and materially contributed to the ultimate triumph of the popes. It was their earnest desire to maintain the ascendancy of the papal see and to crush any hostile opposition to the Church that might arise within its own borders; but they still proceeded pitilessly against heretics and were especially severe upon any who professed a form of faith different from the prescribed Christian religion. The Inquisition did not spare the Spanish Jews, who, flying from the mandate of expulsion issued by Ferdinand and Isabella, came to Rome and were presently caught in the meshes of the Holy Office. So with the Moors exiled from Spain, the "Marranos" who had refused to profess Christianity and who came to Rome, where they were seized and to save their lives made fresh recantation. At this very time a Spanish bishop was accused of heretical belief in Mahometan tenets and arraigned before the pope in person, as chief inquisitor, at a secret consistory. He was convicted and sentenced to the loss of his episcopal dignity with all his benefices and offices, and having been degraded from every order, he was imprisoned in a

chamber in St. Angelo for the term of his natural life. His religious principles were, of course, at variance with those of the Roman Church, but it was his practices that gave the greatest offence to the pope, Alexander VI, and his licentious court. They could not tolerate an ex-bishop who, according to his biographer, "laughed at indulgences, ate flesh on Fridays and Saturdays, breakfasted before saying mass and denied purgatory." This was about 1498 when the Holy Office was at the zenith of its power, and it is difficult to understand why the offending bishop was not burned at the stake.

The advent of the Protestant Reformation undoubtedly inspired widespread terror in Italy and stirred up the clerical hierarchy to fight for their land. The pope of the hour, Paul III, decided to have recourse to a new Inquisition almost simultaneously with the bull convening the Council of Trent in 1542, and "The Supreme and Universal Inquisition," as it was styled, was established in Rome at that date. The papal court was fully determined to crush the Reformation by the exhibition of all the forces it had at command, and although it is on record that the new Inquisition was most unpopular at the Council of Trent, and greatly disliked in many great cities, where its proposed establishment produced insurrections, it was nevertheless introduced and granted extensive powers. It was governed by six cardinals who were given almost unlimited authority. They could imprison

all guilty or suspected persons, proceed against them until final sentence, and punish the convicted with due penalties; they were entitled to requisition and employ the secular arm to slay the victims they condemned. These plenary powers, involving life and limb, they claimed to exercise over the subjects of every sovereign in the world. Only the Spanish Inquisition, which had deserved well of the Church by its unflinching severity, was exempted from the direct control of the Roman congregation. Nor was it necessary to exercise supervision in Spanish territory, for the court of Spain was at one with the pope, who appointed the Spanish inquisitor-general and had a warm ally against the Reformation in Philip II.

The new cardinal-inquisitors were not slow to use their powers. They were especially anxious to silence the printing press and laid a heavy hand upon writers and their publishers. Books were suppressed or destroyed, but numbers were circulated throughout Italy in spite of all prohibitions and prosecutions. Severe penalties were inflicted in Tuscany on the possessors as well as the printers of heretical books. Twenty-two such persons were marched in procession in Florence, wearing an ignominious garb of penance, and then publicly exposed in the cathedral. At Modena an insurrection was provoked by the doings of the inquisitors in regard to a writer, who was arbitrarily thrown into prison while his books and papers were seized and

forwarded to Rome. The printing and issuing of a new work was hampered by many restrictions; its appearance must be sanctioned after its perusal by some high ecclesiastic; in Rome, by the pope's vicar or master of the sacred palace; in other cities, by the bishop of the diocese or some one "having understanding." The penalties of disobedience were forfeiture of the books when published, which were burned publicly, with fines to be added to the sums collected for the building of St. Peter's.

Commerce did not prosper in Italian cities where the Inquisition exercised sway. Foreign merchants, often of strange faith, who came to Florence, were eyed with suspicion. They were spied upon and kept under close surveillance; people declined to remain in the city and do business under such restrictions. Streets were deserted, shops remained empty and trading vessels no longer sailed up the Arno. A terrific disturbance occurred in Naples when the Inquisition was brought there in 1547. The Neapolitans both hated and dreaded it. The Spanish Viceroy appealed to force and marched three thousand troops into the city, so that a desperate conflict ensued. The soldiers fought hard with the exasperated populace, and before the church bells rang out for vespers the streets ran with blood and were choked with corpses. In Sicily, Philip II established it more easily by bribing the chief men and heaping favours upon them.

In Rome the Inquisition pursued its course and

speedily disposed of all who clung to the new and hated opinions. Persecution was incessant under succeeding popes, Paul III, Julius III, Paul IV and Pius IV. During their rule many learned and pious men were sacrificed by the Inquisition in Rome and beyond it. Fannio was hanged at Florence in 1550 and then burned on the demand of Julius. The following year Galeazzo Treccio was imprisoned, tortured and burned alive in a prison of the Milanese. Giovanni de Monteleiro, professor of metaphysics in the University of Bologna, was burned in Rome in 1551. Francesco Gambia, who had been present at a Protestant service in Geneva, was seized when crossing Lake Como, strangled, beheaded and his body burned; Pomponio Algieri of Padua, was found to be a heretic, was carried prisoner to Venice, but not being a Venetian was surrendered to the cardinal inquisitors, removed to Rome and burned alive in the presence of Paul IV; Giovanni Luigi Paschali, an eminent Protestant preacher in Calabria, was taken to Rome, tried, condemned and burned just outside the castle of St. Angelo, at which ceremony Pope Pius V presided. Paschali was a learned theologian, and after he had been tortured and was on the brink of execution, he maintained a long disputation with a great controversialist in the presence of a galaxy of cardinals, bishops and distinguished clerics assembled in his cell.

Venice was always ready to curry favour with the Inquisition. An Italian, Altieri, attached to the

British Legation, wrote from Venice about 1550 to Martin Luther: "Many have been seized and are pining away in perpetual imprisonment. . . . All conspire together to oppress the Lord and his anointed, and nowhere is this calamity more cruel and prevalent than in Venice itself." The spies of the Inquisition were active in denouncing the secret worshippers according to the new faith who still lurked in the city, and they were forthwith tried and condemned. The form of execution was usually by drowning in the lagoons.

Paul IV entertained the gravest fears regarding the end of the Reformation, and was the most strenuous in urging the inquisitors to root out the deadly heresy. The prisons of the Inquisition but just erected were crowded to overflowing. Informers were ever busy in denouncing people to the Holy Office. The slightest suspicion was enough to bring about arrest and consignment to some foul dungeon. No one ventured to breathe a word of protest against the severity of the tribunal. To betray sympathy for the sufferers would have been held an offence which would surely lead to punishment as an abettor of the heresy. Even the college of cardinals trembled, for one of their august body had been incarcerated by the pope in the castle of St. Angelo, from which he was handed over to the inquisitors.

This was Cardinal Morone, who owed his hard fate very much to the personal enmity of Paul IV.

He had distinguished himself greatly at the Council of Trent and such was his repute that the tribunal was unable or unwilling to find him guilty. The pope then desired to release him, but the cardinal refused to leave his prison without a public acknowledgment by the holy father of his innocence. While still a prisoner Paul IV died, and Morone was summoned to attend a conclave for the appointment of a successor. The bishop of Modena was imprisoned about the same time as Morone, but with even greater injustice. An eminent English Catholic cleric, Dr. Wylson, narrowly escaped from the clutches of the Inquisition. He had come to Rome seeking a refuge from Queen Mary, whom he had displeased, and while there wrote a couple of books, one on rhetoric and the other on logic. These were deemed heretical, and he was arrested by the Holy Office.

It would have gone hard with him had not the turbulent Roman people been moved to rise up just then against the tyranny of the Inquisition and break out in deeds of violence. At the death of Pope Paul IV, the common prisons had been thrown open, according to custom, and numbers of criminals released. But the prison of the Holy Office remained strictly closed, and the people resenting this attacked it, forced the gates, emptied it and set the building on fire. In the tumult Dr. Wylson got away, fled from Rome and returned to England, where he came into great favour with Queen Eliz-



abeth when she ascended the throne, and was advanced to be one of her principal secretaries of State.

This first prison of the Inquisition thus destroyed was rebuilt by Pius V in 1509 and is the same as that now standing in Rome, the vast edifice behind St. Peter's, near the Porta Cavalleggeri, and fallen to other uses. During the French occupation of Rome to bolster up the papal power, it became a barrack, and the tribunal of the Inquisition was held there until suppressed, to be revived by Pius IX after 1849 in an apartment in the Vatican. The three tiers of cells it contained are still on view, but the interesting archives have been removed to some place of safety where they await the curious investigator.

The Holy Office much needed its new prison. The cardinal-inquisitors were indefatigable and a letter dated 1568 referring to their labours reports that "people are every day burned, strangled or beheaded; all jails and places of confinement are full and there is constant toil in building new prisons." Pius V was an uncompromising supporter of the Holy Office. He was the first to bear the title of Supreme Inquisitor, adopted by all his successors. Later Gregory XIII became prefect of the congregation of the Inquisition, an office also held by all succeeding pontiffs.

A Franciscan friar, Fra Tommaso di Mileto, was very barbarously punished in 1564 by the inquisi-

tors, on a charge of heretical opinions and practices. Among his offences was a belief that it was not sinful to eat meat on certain days, that images and relics should not be revered, that there was no virtue in papal indulgences, that priests could not bind and loose from sin. For this he was sentenced to be walled up alive within four walls which were built up around him, with no more space to spare than just enough for him to kneel down before a crucifix, and "out of that place he was not to stir but there suffer anguish of heart and shed many tears." A small aperture was left above through which food might be dropped down to him. This kind of sepulchre was used in Spain where many skeletons of persons walled up, *emparedados*, have been found in places of the character described.

Another notable victim of the Inquisition about this period was Pietro Carnesecchi, a man of high estate and great learning who had been protonotary to Clement VII, but had enjoyed the friendship of many of the reformed faith. He had on one occasion been taken into custody by the Holy Office. Duke Cosimo of Florence had obtained his release and he left Rome for France, where he became still more closely attached to the Protestants. Pope Paul IV, bitterly incensed against him, summoned him back to Rome, but he replied by a contumacious letter which was construed into a direct attack upon the pope. In spite of this, he impudently paid a visit to his friend, the grand-duke at Florence, who im-

mediately gave him up to Pius V, now pope, saying he would surrender his own child to the holy father under similar circumstances, and he went so far as to allow his guest to be arrested at his dinner table.

Carnesecchi met with no mercy. He was speedily tried upon thirty-four charges and sentenced to be handed over to the secular arm, which clothed him in the *sanbenito*, the yellow frock of the condemned heretic, and prepared to burn him at the stake. Duke Cosimo, full of remorse, vainly strove to move the pope to compassion, but only gained a respite of ten days, during which Carnesecchi might recant and return to the bosom of the Church. Several ingenious priests were sent to reclaim him from the error of his ways, but all argument and exhortation failed and he went to his fiery death with singular courage and constancy. He preferred to go on foot to the scaffold, but with a certain pomp, wearing fine linen under the *sanbenito* and elegant gloves. Extreme terror was felt all through Italy at this tragedy. Every one feared for himself, his relatives and his friends. Pleasant confidential intercourse ceased and no one dared speak, even in the privacy of the family circle. No nationality was safe, not even the English. A Mr. Thomas Reynolds, resident in Naples, was informed against and sent to Rome a prisoner, where he was laid upon the rack and died under torture.

Giordano Bruno was one of the most celebrated philosophers of his day. He travelled far and wide

from Italy and Switzerland, to France, Germany and England, making open profession of the reformed religion. But he was rash enough to venture back to Italy, going first to Padua, where he fancied himself safe from the Inquisition. He was sadly mistaken for the Venetian authorities were no friends to heresy, and he was arrested and removed to the prison of the Piombi, under the "Leads" of the doge's palace in Venice, and detained there for six years, after which he was taken to Rome. Here he underwent numerous examinations and constantly disputed with the best theologians, among the rest with Cardinal Bellarmine, the chief inquisitor. This trial was prolonged for two years until, wearied out by his unchanging firmness, he was taken into the great hall of the palace of the Inquisition and his sentence read to him as he knelt before the cardinals. After reciting in full his many offences, it was ordered that he should be degraded, for he had received priest's orders, excommunicated and delivered to the secular arm for punishment, which was to be "inflicted as tenderly as possible and without effusion of blood." Bruno heard the sentence without emotion, remarking: "I dare say you feel greater pain in pronouncing these penalties than I do in receiving them." The governor of Rome now took charge of him and he was locked up for a week in one of the common gaols of the city where he was closely watched, in the vain hope that he might

yield; but he was firm to the last, when he was taken to the stake, still obstinately refusing to make recantation. The fire was lighted under him and he was burned alive, without even raising his eyes to the crucifix thrust into his face. Thus perished one of the first scholars in Europe.

A still more disgraceful case, except that it did not terminate fatally, was that of the renowned astrologer Galileo. It belongs to a later date and occurred in the pontificate of Urban VIII, the pope who first armed the castle of St. Angelo with artillery. Urban VIII was also a champion persecutor, an energetic patron of the Holy Office, of whose merciless activity he thoroughly approved. Widespread alarm prevailed in Italy when it was seen that the Inquisition not only dealt summarily with religious opinions but also, yielding to the most prejudiced ignorance, was fiercely opposed to the advancement of natural science. Galileo, who had reached his seventieth year at the time of his troubles, had long resided in Florence, his native city, as a professor of mathematics under the protection of Ferdinand. He was far in advance of his age and had made many important discoveries. He had gauged the exact oscillations of the pendulum and had invented an astronomical clock; he brought out the first microscope, and with a long range telescope he established many remarkable astronomical facts, such as the explanation of the Milky Way as a collection of small stars, and that

the moon was a burned out planet whose light was due to reflection. He dared, moreover, to adopt the theory of Copernicus, that the earth revolved round the sun and not the sun round the earth. When he published his own observations in support of this novel and startling theory, he fell at once under the censure of the Inquisition. The extravagant views entertained by Galileo were pronounced to be absurd, false and heretical. The cardinal-inquisitors referred the writings of Galileo to their literary advisers who, of course, passed a strongly condemnatory verdict upon them. Galileo was warned to abandon the incriminating doctrine and carefully to abstain from teaching it. The astronomer promised to do this, but did not keep his word and ventured to write a dialogue between three persons; one of them still in doubt, the second a believer in the Ptolemaic system — that held by the priests — and the third a disciple of Copernicus and Galileo. When this dialogue was circulated, Pope Urban VIII fancied that he had been caricatured in one of the characters and became greatly enraged against Galileo, who was again summoned before the Holy Office. The grand-duke, Ferdinand, was reluctant to surrender him but his priest-ridden grand-duchess implored him to yield obedience to the Church; and poor Galileo, now in failing health and a prey to great fear, was sent back to Rome to be again arraigned before the tribunal. We have an account of his adventures in his own hand.

“At last, as a true Catholic, I was obliged to retract my opinion and by way of penalty my Dialogue was prohibited; and after five months I was dismissed from Rome. As the pestilence was then raging in Florence, with generous pity the house of the dearest friend I had in Sienna, Mgr. Archbishop Piccolomini, was appointed to be my prison; and in his most gentlemanly conversation I experienced so great delight and satisfaction that here I resumed my studies, arrived at and demonstrated most of my mechanical conclusions concerning the resistance of solids and some other speculations.

“After about five months when the pestilence had ceased in my native place, in the beginning of December in the present year 1633, His Holiness permitted me to dwell within the narrow limits of that house I love so well, in the freedom of the open country. I therefore returned to the village of Bellosguardo and thence to Arcetri; where I still am breathing salubrious air, not far from my own dear Florence.”

Galileo died in Florence, to which he was at last permitted to return, at the age of seventy-eight years. It is an interesting subject for speculation to conjecture what this great genius might have achieved if he had been born later and could have utilized all the appliances supplied by modern science. His personal character was that of a most delightful companion, a man of learning and deeply read, but no pedant. On the contrary, his humour

was genial, his wit pungent, and he sometimes made enemies by his banter, as in the case of Urban VIII. The well known story of his whispered protest in private denial of the open admission wrung from him as to this movement of the earth is said to be apocryphal. But it was very likely that a man of his cheerful disposition would say *sotto voce* "but it does move all the same." Galileo was a devoted lover of art, passionately attached to music and poetry, and he was said to have known the works of Ariosto by heart.

Gabriello Fiamma was bishop of Chioggia, near Venice, and a popular preacher throughout Italy. He narrowly escaped the Inquisition. When in Naples all his manuscripts and note books were seized, even to the last scrap in his possession, but nothing compromising was found to convict him, and it appeared that he had been betrayed by some envious and malevolent foe.

Fra Paolo Sarpi, the historian of the Council of Trent, was nearly undone by an invitation to appear in Rome, which he prudently evaded, but an unsuccessful attempt was made to assassinate him secretly, and he was dangerously wounded. His Latin pun is remembered when he said, "agnosco stylum Romanum," a phrase with a double meaning, "I recognize the Roman way" or "I know the Roman dagger." His friend and brother priest, Fulgencio Manpedi, was less fortunate. Manpedi rashly accepted the invitation to Rome, and left Venice under



a safe conduct which was tantamount to an arrest. On arrival, he was treated at once as a prisoner for trial and sentence was in due course passed upon him. He was to remain in Rome for five years, during which he was to visit weekly the seven "privileged" churches within the city and recite in them the seven penitential psalms with certain litanies, orisons and prayers, and he was to fast rigorously every Friday. This fiat was pronounced by the commissary of the Inquisition seated in state in the palace of the Holy Office, and Manpedi heard it kneeling. His offence was a suspicion of heresy in his preaching in Venice, and too great friendliness with Sir Henry Wotton, the British ambassador there. He was not, however, to be let off thus lightly, and being persuaded to make abjuration, signed his own death warrant. He was thrown into the Tor di Nona and thence removed to a dungeon of the Inquisition, and fresh charges were brought against him, based on the papers seized at his arrest. Examination under torture followed, then conviction and sentence. He was then handed over to the governor of Rome and whipped with a lash of bulls' hide but without drawing blood. Last of all, he was taken to the Campo di Fiori, that Smithfield of Rome, and there strangled and burned.

The Holy Office boldly proceeded against foreign subjects when it caught them, and much scandal was caused by the arrest and ill-treatment of a certain Abbé de Bois, a Frenchman. This was held

to be a violation of the law of nations, as the abbé was an agent of the Crown of France with authorised letters of credit, but he was forced to do penance in Rome for sermons he had preached in Paris against the Jesuits. The story of De Dominis, ex-archbishop of Spalato in Dalmatia, shows that the long arm of the Inquisition might be extended to interfere with a former dignitary of the Church, even in England, where he had taken refuge. De Dominis had come over in the character of a convert to Protestantism and was cordially welcomed. Numbers flocked to see and hear him. Great personages relieved his poverty with rich gifts. The King, James I, gave him valuable preferment; the deanery of Windsor, one of the most genteel and complete dignities in the land, the mastership of the Savoy and a fat living in Berkshire. He is described as ostentatious, vain and eaten up with conceit. He was certainly impudent, for he exasperated his former masters by publishing many controversial writings, and his vigorous attacks produced great discomfiture in Rome. A deep plot was designed to ruin him. His rapid rise in the English Church had made him the subject of much envy and many detractors were at work to undermine his standing with the King. De Dominis, stung to the quick, said some foolish things and let it be supposed that he might be won back to Rome if handled properly. Gundomar, the famous Spanish ambassador at the court of St. James, sent word to the

pope that De Dominis would accept pardon if it were offered to him. Gregory XV, an old friend, expressed his willingness to forgive and forget and promised De Dominis the archbishopric of Salerno if he would come back, and the still greater gift of a cardinal's hat. On receiving these overtures, De Dominis wrote to James I, asking leave to depart as he was bent on securing "the reunion of all the churches in Christendom." He went first to Brussels, where he waited six months for a safe conduct; and as none came, ventured to proceed to Rome, relying upon the friendship of the pope. At this juncture Gregory died and was succeeded by Urban VIII, who did not know De Dominis and had a special hatred for heretics. The confiding priest had been given no archbishopric, the cardinal's hat was not in sight, but he had been living till now upon a comfortable pension and in a certain state. All this ceased suddenly and he found lodgings in the castle of St. Angelo just as he was on the point of seeking safety in flight. There was much to incriminate him found in the papers seized at his arrest, and even in the castle he adhered to his detestable opinions. His heart, they said, was still with the heretics although his body was in Rome.

Then he fell sick and suddenly died. No one could well believe it was a natural death. Four sworn physicians to the pope examined the corpse, however, and deposed that no signs of violence were to be seen upon it. The suggestion of poison was

not met because it was not put forward. But the Holy Office desired to show that it would have been justified in taking his life. At an imposing ceremony in the church of St. Mary, and in the presence of the greatest personages, ecclesiastical and civil, the effigy of De Dominis was arraigned and condemned to peculiar pains and penalties. "Marc Anthony" was declared to have relapsed and was sentenced to be degraded and cast out. All his writings were to be burned and his goods confiscated to the Inquisition. His body, now far advanced toward putrefaction, was torn from the coffin, thrown upon a pile in the Campo di Fiori and consumed before a vast crowd.

The Inquisition in Rome was active to the last and died hard. Napoleon would have none of it and threw wide open its prison, but Leo XII, when the popes regained mastery, revived the old tyranny; the congregation of cardinals was reestablished with the pope as prefect, and persecution was resumed on the old lines. In the revolution of 1849, when Pope Pius IX fled to Gaeta, it was again done away with. At that time the Inquisition prison was still found to contain two inmates, an aged bishop and a nun. The first was no doubt the person mentioned by Whiteside in his travels in Italy, dated 1848, and the incident may be fitly quoted here.

"We returned from our delightful walk by the prison of the Inquisition, close to the Vatican. Within these gloomy walls has been confined for

many years a very extraordinary person, the archbishop of Memphis. Passing on foot in this quarter of Rome, we were conversing with a student for the priesthood, who said mysteriously, 'There has been a bishop in prison there for many years,' pointing to the Inquisition building. Curiosity impelled me afterward to inquire into the history of the ecclesiastic so long confined, when the following singular narrative was given me by a clergyman, who appeared to be well informed on the subject: In the reign of Leo XII, some twenty-five years ago, that pope received a letter from the Pasha of Egypt, informing His Holiness that he and a large portion of his subjects desired to embrace Christianity and to be received into the bosom of the Church of Rome; and announcing that he and they were willing to conform to everything, providing the pope sent out an archbishop, with a suitable train of ecclesiastics, and requesting His Holiness to do him the favour of appointing a certain young student, whom he named, the first archbishop of Memphis and despatch him to Egypt. No doubt whatever was entertained of the truth of this communication, but an objection presented itself in the youth of the ecclesiastical student whom the Pasha wished to have consecrated archbishop. The pope consulted the cardinals, who advised him not to make so dangerous a precedent as that of raising a novice to so high a rank in the Church, but His Holiness, tempted by the desire of extending the empire of the Church

and converting a kingdom to Christianity, resolved to conform to the wishes of the Pasha, and consecrated the youth as Archbishop of Memphis.

“The new archbishop was sent out, attended by a train of priests, to Egypt. When the ship arrived, a communication was made to the authorities in Egypt, who repudiated the archbishop and declared the affair was an imposition. His Grace then confessing the fraud, was instantly arrested and reconducted to Rome. He had been the author of the letter which imposed on the pope; his original intention having been to confess to the pope as a priest, after his consecration, the imposition he had practised; and as the pope could not betray a secret imparted to him in the confessional, the offender might have obtained absolution in time and so escaped punishment. Whether this would have been practicable, I know not; but as it was not accomplished, and as the youth had the rank of archbishop indelibly imprinted on him, nothing remained but to confine His Grace for the remainder of his life; and accordingly he was at once consigned to this prison near the Vatican, where he has now spent twenty-five summers; and occasionally the Archbishop of Memphis may be seen putting his head out of the windows to breathe the fresh air of heaven and gaze upon the Vatican from a prison whence he never can escape.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact the Archbishop of Memphis did leave the prison under a new régime.

The latest account of the old Inquisition is from an eye witness the Father Gavazzi who made some noise in his time as a fugitive priest and who visited the place in 1852. He wrote the following description :

“ I found no instruments of torture, for they were destroyed at the first French invasion and because such instruments were not used afterwards by the modern Inquisition. I did, however, find in one of the prisons of the second court a furnace and the remains of a woman’s dress. I shall never be able to believe that that furnace was used for the living, it not being in such a place, or of such a kind as to be of service to them. Everything, on the contrary, combines to persuade me that it was made use of for horrible deaths and to consume the remains of victims of inquisitorial executions. Another object of horror I found between the great hall of judgment and the luxurious apartment of the chief jailer, or *primo custode*, the Dominican friar who presided over this diabolical establishment. This was a deep trap, a shaft opening into the vaults under the Inquisition. As soon as the so-called criminal had confessed his offence, the second keeper, who is always a Dominican friar, sent him to the father commissary to receive a relaxation of his punishment. In the hope of pardon, the confessed culprit would go toward the apartment of the Holy Inquisitor; but in the act of setting foot at its entrance, the trap opened and the world of the living heard

no more of him. I examined some of the earth found in the pit below this trap; it was a compost of common earth, rottenness, ashes and human hair, fetid to the smell and horrible to the sight and thought of the beholder.

“Next you descend into the vaults by very narrow stairs. A narrow corridor leads you to the several cells which for smallness and for stench are a hundred times more horrible than the dens of lions and tigers in the Colosseum. Wandering in this labyrinth of most fearful prisons, which may be called ‘graves for the living,’ I came to a cell full of skeletons without skulls, buried in lime. The skulls detached from the bodies had been collected in a hamper by the first visitors. Whose were those skeletons? And why were they buried in that place and in that manner? I have heard some zealous ecclesiastics, trying to defend the Inquisition from the charge of having condemned its victims to a secret death, say that the palace of the Inquisition was built on a burial ground belonging anciently to a hospital for pilgrims, and that the skeletons found were none other than those of pilgrims who had died in that hospital. But everything contradicts this specious defence. Suppose that there had been a cemetery there; it could not have had subterranean galleries and cells laid out with so great regularity; and even if there had been such — against all probability — the remains of bodies would have been removed on laying the



foundations of the palace, to leave the space free for the subterranean part of the Inquisition. Besides, it is contrary to the use of common tombs to bury the dead by carrying them through a door at the side; for the mouth of the sepulchre is always at the top. And again it has never been the custom in Italy to bury the dead, singly, in quicklime; but in time of plague, the dead bodies have been usually laid in a grave until it was sufficiently full, and then quicklime has been laid over them to prevent pestilential exhalations, by hastening the decomposition of the infected corpses. This custom was continued some years ago in the cemeteries of Naples and especially in the daily burial of the poor. Therefore the skeletons found in the Inquisition of Rome could not belong to persons who had died a natural death in a hospital; nor could any one under such a supposition explain the mystery of all the bodies being buried in lime, with exception of the head. It remains then beyond doubt that the subterranean vault contained the victims of one of the many secret martyrdoms of the tribunal. The following is a most probable opinion, if it be not rather the history of a fact:

“The condemned were immersed in a bath of slaked lime gradually filled up to their necks. The lime, by little and little, enclosed the sufferers, or walled them up alive. The torment was thus extreme but slow. As the lime rose higher and higher the respiration of the victims became more and more

painful, because more difficult; so that what with the suffocation of the smoke and the anguish of a compressed breathing, they died in a manner most horrible and desperate. Some time after their death, the heads would naturally separate from the bodies and roll away into the hollows left by the shrinking of the lime. Any other explanation of the fact that may be attempted will be found improbable and unnatural."

## CHAPTER VIII

### LATER DAYS IN ROME

Crime very prevalent in Rome under later popes — Repressive edicts — Gambling carried to great excess — Atrocious murders committed by persons of high rank — Presentation of the China — Decrees published by the governor of Rome against law-breakers — Discipline of nunneries — Guiseppe Balsamo, called Count Cagliostro, the famous adventurer — His travels and marriage — He professes to have discovered the "Philosopher's stone" — He foretells the advent of the French Revolution — His last visit to Rome — Arrest and imprisonment — Pope Pius VI commutes the sentence of death to perpetual imprisonment — Balsamo dies in prison and his wife in a convent.

UNDER the later popes and in spite of many repressive edicts, crime prevailed largely in Rome. Immorality of life was a prominent vice in all classes, especially the highest. Gambling was indulged to such an extent that entire fortunes were staked upon a turn of the cards and a throw of dice. Indeed, several members of the aristocracy only saved themselves from utter ruin by obtaining a kind of *lettre de cachet* from the pope which kept their creditors at bay, or by the strictness of the laws of primogeniture, or by deeds of trust which enabled them to save something from the general wreck. To such a height was the passion

for gambling carried, that special edicts were issued in 1757, 1790 and 1799, forbidding all games of "Azzardo, Invito and Resto" under the penalty of a fine of five hundred scudi, five years at the galleys and the forfeiture of all the winnings. Nor was this severity unnecessary. Every one from the highest to the lowest played the favourite games, "Bassetta," "Faraone," "Zecchinetta," "Caffo," "Trentuquaranta," "Bancofallito," "Macao" and "Ventuno," and it was no uncommon thing to see a table covered with heaps of gold and notes, much of which could ill be spared.

The most stringent regulations, rigidly enforced, could not check crime. When a papal conclave was sitting, much time was wasted before the new election could be made, and it was then that anarchy and confusion reigned and the gravest crimes were committed with impunity by all classes. Thus the Abbé Ceracchi murdered his brother and was afterwards hanged; the Abbé Anguilla, a high official of the papal court, committed an atrocious murder and the prince, Sigismund Chigi, administered slow poison to Cardinal Carandini who escaped almost by a miracle. As the centuries passed, misdeeds multiplied and with them the infliction of the extreme penalty of the law. Immediately before the Napoleonic era, the scaffold was constantly in use and many culprits were hanged, drawn and quartered. While the French were supreme, milder methods prevailed, but when the papal authorities

again came into power, a reactionary movement set in and capital punishment was again the rule.

Pope Leo XII was a ferocious ruler who loved the sight of blood and who approved of cruel punishments, such as the flogging of Guiseppe Francini, who was convicted of having assassinated Monsignor Traietto, and was beheaded while stoutly protesting his innocence. During this pontificate "no less than 339 persons, many of them condemned for what we should now term trivial offences, were executed." In these days the carnival produced the greatest disorders. The police were utterly powerless to restrain the excesses of the people. Their lawlessness was, of course, stimulated by the example of the nobles who defied all regulations, although these were often of a severe and summary kind.

The ceremony of the presentation of the *Chinea*, when the white palfrey, richly caparisoned, carrying the tribute of the king of Naples to the pope, proceeded in state from the Colonna Palace to the Vatican, was always the occasion of disturbance. The streets were crowded to see it pass and the people gave themselves up to wild roistering. They passed the time in quarrelling, drinking, gambling, fighting, and were in open conflict with the bargello and his myrmidons of the police. The following morning all these disturbers of the public peace, who had been taken red handed, were flogged by the public executioner, or exposed in the pillory.

Some extracts from the decrees published by the governor of Rome will show that the clerical authorities were anxious that the people should be virtuous and well-behaved. The whole question of public demeanour was dealt with in a section of the criminal code prescribing the penalties for "trying to stir up sedition and disorder," as follows:

"His Eminence ordains that any one of whatsoever station, who shall break the peace, or cause it to be broken, or who shall endeavour to stir up strife, by word or deed, shall be liable to *morte naturale*, the ruin and demolition of his house, and the confiscation of all his goods; and if he will not submit himself to the jurisdiction of the Court, he shall be condemned, as contumacious, to all the aforesaid penalties, and a picture shall be hung up of him in his ordinary dress in some public place, representing him as suspended heels uppermost, and with his name, surname, residence and the nature of his crime written underneath."

Another law, aimed at the maintenance of good order in the city, by peremptorily forbidding the carrying of offensive weapons, ran as follows:

"No person shall be permitted to carry any arms, whether offensive or defensive, without permission under pain of the following punishment: the loss of the arms, three lashes and a fine of twenty-five scudi, if the offence has been by day — the fine to be double if at night. And under the name of arms are included all bludgeons and small sacks and night

sticks and large stones. His Eminence also prohibits any one from taking into, or keeping in a house, or elsewhere, and from selling, making or repairing of pistols, under pain of death, confiscation of goods and other penalties, as laid down in the bulls of Pius IV and Pius V; and if, in making search, the officers of justice shall find any prohibited arms, of whatsoever kind, laid on the ground at less than six paces from any person, the said arms shall be presumed to belong to that person, and such presumption shall suffice to subject that person to the torture."

The discipline of the nunneries was necessarily strict. Yet it was at times defied and crimes were committed that throw a baleful light upon the general condition of these retreats, generally deemed decorous and holy. In 1633, a nun of noble family, an inmate of the convent of St. Domenico, on Monte Magnanapoli, was foully murdered by a lay sister of the same house; and two other nuns, who ran to her assistance on hearing her cries, were badly wounded by the assassin. The lay sister, by order of the pope, was strangled in the convent and confessed before her death that she had done the deed at the instigation of another nun, a member of the Aldobrandini family, and a niece of Pope Clement VIII. This lady was quietly put out of the way.

Again, a young nobleman of Ferrara fell in love with a nun of the convent of Santa Croce. He corresponded with her for some time, and finally

planned with a servant to introduce him into the nunnery concealed in a box. But through some mistake the servant did not realise that any one was as yet inside, and delayed the delivery of the box. When at length it reached the nun, who alone had the key, and she opened it, the man was found to be all but suffocated. The unhappy girl in her terror and perplexity revealed the whole affair to the lady abbess, who reported it to the vicar, who in his turn told the pope. Whereupon the poor nun, a beautiful girl of eighteen years, was arraigned for her offence and sentenced to be walled up alive in the basement of the nunnery.

A later law imposed severe penalties punishing the violation of nunneries. It reads:

“And because all sacred places — but, above all, nunneries — deserve every respect, His Eminence orders and desires that if any one in any way whatsoever seeks to enter a nunnery without official permission, whether by night or day, he shall incur the penalty of death; even if he have not committed any special fault. And all who have in any way aided or abetted him shall incur the like penalty.”

And another law was very severe upon the crime of blasphemy, as follows:

“Although it should be so repugnant to the nature of man to offend God Almighty by blaspheming either the Person of His own Divine Majesty, or that of His Saints, as to make it utterly unnecessary to provide human laws against the sin, yet, as His



Eminence desires to correct the natural depravity of the human heart, it is hereby ordained that — if any one shall blaspheme, curse or in any way lightly name the most Holy Name of God, or of his only begotten Son, our Redeemer, or of the Most Holy Mother, always a virgin, or of any saint whatsoever, etc., etc. — he shall, for the first offence, incur a penalty of three lashes, given in public; for the second, a public flogging; and for the third, the galleys for five years. And the evidence of one reliable witness shall suffice in addition to that of the accuser, at the pleasure of the judge.”

Another mandate of high moral tendency states: “Whoever shall violently assault and kiss, or try to kiss, a virtuous woman, in public — even though he should not actually succeed in kissing her, but should only proceed so far as an embrace — shall be condemned to the galleys for life; shall have his possessions confiscated; and shall even be liable to the penalty of death at the option of His Eminence.”

The honesty of the purveyors of food was closely watched by the bishop-governor in a law which reads:

“I will that any bakers or other tradesmen who do not sell well-made bread of good weight shall incur a penalty of three lashes and a fine of ten scudi each; one-half of the fine to be applied to pious uses and the other half to go to the accuser, or the executioner, or in other ways, at the pleasure of the judge.”

A most interesting account is given of the passage through Rome, at the latter end of the eighteenth century, of that remarkable personage and most famous adventurer Giuseppe Balsamo. It was in Rome that this famous swindler was finally unmasked, his frauds exposed and he himself seized, tried and condemned to death. His story drawn from authentic records is worth telling in some detail.

This famous impostor was commonly called Count Cagliostro. Carlyle says of him that he "was not so much a liar as a lie." He was born at Palermo on the 8th June, 1743, being the son of Pietro Balsamo, a merchant, and Felice Braconieri, his wife. Young Giuseppe was sent as a lad to the seminary of San Rocco in Palermo, and during his stay there he ran away several times from school. When he was thirteen years old he was consigned to the care of the father-general of the Benfratelli, who himself took him to Cartagirone, where he entered on his novitiate and among other things studied alchemy and a little medicine. While in the convent he was repeatedly flogged for misconduct. Among the other sins he committed there, it is specially recorded that when it came to his turn to read the "Martyrology" at meal times, he would substitute the names of famous murderers for those of saints and virgins. He was invariably the ring-leader in any disturbance and such was his impudent boldness that he often helped to rescue prison-

ers from the custody of the police. About this time he also began to study Latin and drawing, and his skill in imitation was so great that he frequently forged tickets for the theatre. When he quitted the convent he went to live with an uncle from whom he stole considerable sums of money. He also managed to ingratiate himself with one of his cousins who was in love with a rich gentleman of Palermo, and carried letters between them; and representing to her admirer that the young lady would be gratified by a gift of money and jewels, he obtained possession of both which he quietly appropriated.

The next offence of Balsamo was the forging of a will, and before the fraud was discovered he was far away from Palermo. He was always believed to have murdered a canon, although the authorities failed to obtain actual proof of his guilt, but he was imprisoned several times for robberies and assaults.

Finally he stole more than sixty ounces of gold from one Marano, a goldsmith, whom he had deluded into the belief that he could show him where a vast hidden treasure lay concealed. Marano, who had not only been robbed but also nearly beaten to death by certain devils invoked by Balsamo, determined to take revenge for all his injuries. This obliged Balsamo to fly from Palermo, and he left the city under a strong suspicion that he had either committed or attempted to commit sacrilege. Then

began his many wanderings. At Messina, one of his first halting places, he met with a certain Althotas, who was a Greek, and from him he acquired a considerable knowledge of chemistry and of Oriental languages. He travelled with this man all over the Greek Archipelago and as far as Egypt, where his companion made silk from hemp.

From Egypt Balsamo journeyed to Rhodes and Malta, where he stayed with Pinto, grand-master of the Order of St. John. He then proceeded to Naples in company with a coral cutter to whom he had been recommended by the grand-master. He lived in Naples for a considerable time and while there made the acquaintance of Prince Pignatelli who afterwards accompanied him into Sicily. On the way he met a priest at Messina who had been one of the devils who helped in the attack on Marano, and later he returned to Naples, where he remained a short time.

And thus it happened that one fine day in the year 1773 he presented himself in Rome, after having travelled through Italy, Greece, Egypt, Arabia and Persia. He was only thirty years old as yet, but his was a larger and more varied experience than most men acquire during their entire lives. And now he was prepared to try his old tricks in a new place and on a grander scale. He established himself in Rome at the "Locanda del Sole" and by means of the letters of introduction he brought with him soon became acquainted with several great per-

sonages, including the Baron de Breteuil, ambassador of the Knights of Malta.

He had not been long in the city before he attached himself to a young girl of the name of Serafina, otherwise Lorenza Feliciani, who lived near the Trinità di Monti. She was born at Monte Rinaldo in the diocese of Fermo, but her father's crimes had driven him from his native place and forced him to seek refuge in Rome. One of her brothers was in the army, and at a later date was present at the siege of Ancona with General Cubiers. Lorenza's father was called Luca Andrea, but he changed his name after he came to Rome. When Cagliostro asked for his daughter in marriage he gave his consent at once, and the wedding took place on the 26th of February. Cagliostro immediately applied himself to the task of undermining his wife's virtue, silencing her scruples by saying "that adultery was no sin in a woman who was actuated simply by motives of self-interest," and by thus selling his honour he succeeded in raising a small sum of money. By and by he made the acquaintance of a certain Ottavio Nicastro, a Sicilian who called himself the Marchese Agliata and who afterward died on the scaffold for premeditated murder. This man falsified an official brevet of the king of Prussia in favour of his friend, representing Balsamo as having been the colonel of one of the Prussian regiments of which he wore the uniform.

But "rogues fall out when honest men agree,"

and these two were no exception to the rule. Nicastro suddenly denounced Balsamo to the governor of Rome as a forger, and the latter had to seek safety in flight. Nicastro, however, seemed immediately to repent of what he had done, and accompanied Balsamo in his hurried departure. The precious pair then visited Loreto, Bologna, Bergamo and Genoa, in all of which places they carried on their usual nefarious practices, among other evil deeds forging a bill for twenty-five scudi payable in Savoy. At Genoa Agliata absconded with everything he could lay hands on, and Balsamo took his wife to Nice and thence to Spain, giving out that he was going on a pious pilgrimage to the shrine of St. James of Compostello.

He remained six months in Barcelona and there continued his usual mode of life. His wife Lorenza was young, of medium height and fair complexion, with a round face, beautiful eyes and a sweet and languishing expression which proved very attractive. She was a most valuable assistant to him in many ways and he had no scruple, as we have said, in availing himself of her services. From Barcelona he journeyed to Madrid, then on to Lisbon and through France to London. In 1780 he was at Strasburg, where the credulous Germans treated him as a supernatural being, and after visiting many other towns in Germany, he appeared once more in Palermo and Naples, representing himself in every city where he stopped as a famous alchemist and

magician who could invoke spirits, revive vanished youth and strength and foretell future events. He also professed to have discovered the secret of the philosopher's stone and to hold the recipe of the much coveted elixir of life, to sell strange aromatic wines which excited the jaded senses, and finally, to be able to turn mercury into gold and to make precious stones increase in size.

It was during the time of his residence in London that his fame became world-wide. One of his first acts there was to enroll himself among the Freemasons, and he very speedily attained to the highest rank in the order. Then he abandoned his paternal name of Balsamo and blossomed out as Alessandro, Count of Cagliostro, a nobleman of vast wealth which he displayed travelling in the greatest pomp and state and surrounded by many servants in splendid liveries. He also gave himself out to be immortal and of an age not to be computed by years, for he possessed the secret of perpetual youth.

He kept up this farce for two years in England and then ventured to return to Palermo, where his ancient enemy, Marano, at once caused him to be arrested, and proceedings were taken against him on account of the will he had previously forged. It seems almost incredible, but it is a fact that he was released from prison owing to the intervention of a powerful aristocrat who lived in Naples and to whom he had letters of introduction.

His fame as a professor of the occult arts spread

faster than the knowledge of his evil deeds. Wherever he went he was received with rapturous enthusiasm. At Mittau in Germany the people were so frantic about him that they seriously entertained the idea of deposing their rightful sovereign and making Cagliostro their ruler. In Paris, however, the rascal received somewhat of a check, for he was proved to be the prime instigator in the affair of the famous diamond necklace, in which both Cardinal Rohan and the Countess de la Motte-Valois were implicated. He was at first imprisoned in the Bastille and afterward expelled from the country on twenty-four hours' notice. Yet such was the faith of the people in this strange creature that the arbitrary decision of the authorities almost produced an uprising in his favour, and his departure from France was more in the nature of a triumph than a disgrace.

He went from Paris to London, and there on the 20th June, 1786, he issued a kind of manifesto to the French people in which he used these remarkable words: — "The time is coming when the Bastille will be destroyed; when a prince shall reign who will abolish '*lettres de cachet*,' convoke the States-General and reform religion;" all of which afterward came to pass. But his stay in London was short. One de Morande, editor of the *Courrier de L'Europe*, denounced him as a charlatan and he had to make a hasty departure for Basle. He was next heard of in Savoy, then in Vienna — whence he was



expelled by order of Joseph II — and later in Trent, where he was welcomed by the prince archbishop until the emperor's orders arrived to drive him out, after which he returned again to Rome.

Cagliostro reached Rome for the last time in May, 1789, and after staying for a short time at the Locanda della Scalinata in the Piazza di Spagna he took a private house in the Piazza Farnese. It was just at the time when so-called "Egyptian Masonry" was being introduced into Rome, and a large and powerful lodge was established at the Villa Malta, near the Porta Pinciana, where meetings were held which were almost public gatherings. An account of one of these meetings which was attended by the Abbé Benedetti, a Roman litterateur, is given in his own words.

"I have just been to a meeting presided over by Cagliostro at the Villa Malta near the Porta Pinciana. It was the Marchese M. P. who insisted upon my going and who accompanied me thither. We went about two o'clock in the evening (nine o'clock according to English time) and entered the precincts of the villa after giving the countersign to the servant in livery who answered our ring. We were then introduced into a large, brightly lighted saloon, whose walls were painted with representations of the square, level, plumb lines and other masonic emblems. There were besides a number of statuettes of Egyptian, Assyrian and Chinese

idols and one of the walls had on it in large letters the mottoes:—

“‘Sum quidquid fuit, est, et erit,  
Nemoque mortalium mihi adhuc  
Velum delraxit.’

“The apartment was full of distinguished persons. You can imagine my astonishment when I recognised His Eminence Cardinal Bernis, ambassador of the most Christian King (of France), Prince Frederick Cesi (junior), the Abbé Ennio Quirino Viconti, Signor di Breteuil, and many other great lords and ladies, among the latter of whom I noticed the Princess Rezzonico, the Princess Santa Croce, the Countess Soderini, and Marchese Massini, attended by a capuchin. At the end of the room there was a kind of altar on which were placed skulls, stuffed monkeys, living serpents, owls whose eyes blinked in the unaccustomed light, old musty parchments, crucibles, amulets, packets of strange powders and similar diabolical articles. In a little while Alessandro Cagliostro made his appearance. He is a man of middle stature, stoutly built, with a stern and yet malicious expression of countenance and a suspicious look in his eyes; in every respect like the portrait I have of him. His wife followed him into the room. She also is very like her picture and is a handsome looking woman, well proportioned and with a very vivacious face.

“Cagliostro at once seated himself upon a three-

legged stool and began to speak somewhat in this fashion: 'It is right that I should tell you about my life, that I should reveal my past to you, that I should tear down the thick veil which impedes your sight. Enter then and hear. Behold the desert annihilated, the gigantic palms projecting their shadow upon the sand; the Nile flowing tranquilly, the sphinxes, obelisks and huge columns rising all around. Behold the marvellous walls of the temples in all their grandeur, the mighty pyramids which rear themselves towards the sky, the labyrinths none can penetrate. It is the sacred city, it is Memphis. Behold King Thothmes III, the glorious, enter it in triumph after having vanquished the Syrians and Canaanites. I see. But lo! I stand in other countries; and behold there is another city, and another temple, even the holy temple where they worship Jehovah in the palace of Osiris. The new deities have supplanted the old ones. I hear voices — the prophet, the Son of God cries aloud. Who is it? It is Christ. Ah! I see Him; He is at the marriage of Cana; He changes the water into wine.'

"Here Cagliostro bounded from his seat, uttering a loud scream. 'No, no!' he shouted. 'You shall not be the only one to do this miracle; — I also will show it, I also will unveil the mystery. Nothing is hidden from me; I know all; I am antediluvian — immortal. Nothing is concealed from me; nothing is impossible — *Ego sum qui sum.*'

“ He then seized a pitcher full of the freshest and purest water which he made us look at and taste. He put some of it into a large crystal cup and taking up a phial poured a few drops out of it into the water. Immediately the water turned the colour of gold and the liquid was transformed into a sparkling wine — looking very much like Orvieto — but which he said was the Falernian of the old Romans. Some of the company tasted it and pronounced it exquisite. Cagliostro resumed his discourse, conducting himself as though inspired. He spoke of his most famous secrets, of his balsams, of his elixirs, and he exhibited one which he declared would prolong life and restore youthful vigour. Some of this he gave certain persons of advanced age who were present to drink, saying that its effects would be visible immediately; and sure enough, the colour presently came into the faded cheeks of those who had partaken of it and the wrinkles seemed in some mysterious manner to vanish from their faces. This afforded Cagliostro a good opportunity to magnify the virtues of his specific, but it appeared to me that very much the same effect would have been produced by a good glass of Montefiascone.

“ Cagliostro next informed us that he possessed the art of increasing the size of precious stones and that he was willing to exhibit his power immediately. So he requested Cardinal Bernis to lend him the solitaire diamond ring that he always wore and

placed it in a crucible into which he poured several liquids. He then began to recite some sort of charm made up of Arabic and Egyptian words. After this he put several powders into the crucible, among them one of a brilliant red hue, and in a few minutes he returned Cardinal Bernis his ring with the diamond twice its original size. The delighted cardinal slipped it on to his finger, crying out that it was a miracle. I am more inclined to believe that the ring was cleverly changed in the crucible and that the one given back to the cardinal had a large rock crystal in it instead of a brilliant.

“Cagliostro’s next proceeding was to call a young girl into the room and to make her gaze steadfastly at a crystal bottle filled with water. The child, whom he called his ward, declared that she saw therein a street leading from one great city to another near it, along which ran an enormous crowd of men and women crying out, ‘Down with the king.’ Cagliostro asked her what country it was and she replied that she heard the people shouting, ‘To Versailles!’ and that there was a nobleman in the midst of them. Cagliostro turned towards us and remarked: ‘Well! my ward has predicted future events. It will not be long before Louis XVI is assaulted by his people in his palace of Versailles; a duke will head the crowd; the monarchy will be overthrown, the Bastille destroyed and tyranny be succeeded by liberty.’

“‘*Diamine!*’ exclaimed His Eminence Cardinal

Bernis, 'How dare you venture to make such prophecies concerning my master?'

"'I am sorry, but they will prove true,' quietly replied the performer, and the fact is undoubted that the scenes foreshadowed actually occurred at the outbreak of the French Revolution.

"Cagliostro," continues the account we are quoting, "produced a decided sensation in the room. Opinions were divided about him; some thought him a superior being gifted with a strange faculty of second sight; some were satisfied that he was a charlatan and an impostor. I was strongly inclined to this view," says the Abbé Benedetti. He was supported in it by the action of the papal authorities.

In the last days of the year, when the storm had broken in Paris, Cagliostro was arrested, together with his wife and the capuchin monk who had been present at the strange meeting above described. All three were first conducted to the castle of St. Angelo and then handed over to the Inquisition and examined by the Holy Office. Cagliostro repudiated all the charges brought against him, but his wife, fearing the rope and the stake, told the story of her husband's life in its most minute particulars and threw the entire blame upon him. He was finally condemned to death, but Pius VI commuted the punishment into perpetual imprisonment in the fortress of San Leo, after he had publicly abjured his errors in the church of Santa Maria sopra

Minerva. His wife was obliged to enter the convent of St. Appollonia in Trastevere where she died, forgotten and in obscurity. Balsamo died in prison in 1795.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE PIOMBI OF VENICE

Growth of Venetian Republic — The famous Council of Ten — Its methods of administration — The Pozzi or "Wells," under the Grand Ducal Palace — The prison of the Piombi or "Leads" of the Ducal Palace — Casanova describes his life there — His arrest and imprisonment — Plans for making his escape — He is suddenly removed to another cell — Fresh plans for escape — Tool passed on to one Father Balbi by a most ingenious method — They gain the roof and effect an entry into the Ducal Palace — They escape and take a gondola to Mestri — Casanova goes to Munich and Paris — Becomes director of the national lottery — A life of intrigue and adventure ends in the castle of Dux in Bohemia.

THE student of history is familiar with the story of the growth of the great Venetian republic from small beginnings to a position of commanding importance in the world. This was the work of its oligarchic institutions and the despotic power wielded by its government, nominally republican, but vested in the irresponsible hands of a certain section of the people. Supreme executive functions were exercised by the famous Council of Ten, which had consolidated its authority after many struggles within and without and maintained it by the usual methods at the disposal of the strong hand. All who dared



to conspire against existing authority, or threatened the peace and safety and continued prosperity of the people, became liable to penalties and punishments designed to warn them and, if necessary, to coerce and repress them. The measures adopted were the same as those in force elsewhere; pecuniary fines were imposed, joined often with personal chastisement and banishment with the knowledge that return to Venice would mean the forfeiture of life by mutilation and death, publicly or privately inflicted, consignment to the galleys, or imprisonment varying in term from short to long periods.

Capital punishment was variously inflicted; Sometimes in public, as when a murderer was beheaded on the scene of the crime and then hung from one of the windows of the Doge's palace or between the two columns of the Piazzetta. Sometimes the culprit, if the offence was great, was paraded the whole length of the Grand Canal, *frustrato e arrotato*. Executions were frequently carried out in private with the purpose of sparing some offender of high rank from the ignominy of being exposed to the public gaze. It was claimed for the Council of Ten and the inquisitors that although the laws were harsh and severe to the last degree, justice was administered legally and regularly and profound secrecy shrouded all their actions. On the whole, the government was better than its reputation.

The earliest prisons in Venice were established in

the very centre of government in the Grand Ducal Palace, where the doge, or chief magistrate, resided and ruled, supported by the Council of Ten, whose chief assistants were the Inquisitors of State, especially appointed to protect its interests by enforcing that policy of secretiveness and mystery so dear to Venetian administration. A decree dated 1321 records the order to construct certain prisons beneath the palace, and another, five years later, orders them enlarged. The old historians are much concerned in denying that these first prisons were underground, although the fact that they were called *pozzi* or "wells" must be taken as clear proof that they were below ground. This description is borne out by the evidence of one who spoke from personal knowledge. Casanova was not himself an inmate of these lower dungeons, but he tells us that he knew them to be like damp tombs; further, he says that they were always two feet deep in the salt water which had penetrated from the canal outside. The occupant was perforce obliged to remain constantly upon a bench or platform raised above the level of the water and on which his bed was laid. He spent both day and night there and consumed his frugal allowance of thin soup and black ammunition bread with all possible speed to save it from the voracious water rats, great numbers of which infested the place. There was little hope for those who were thrown into the *pozzi*, and yet Casanova assures us that some reached a green old age in

these horrible habitations. One criminal who died there when Casanova was in the Piombi had spent thirty-seven years in one of the wells. He was forty-four years old when first imprisoned. This was a Frenchman named Beguelin, who had been a captain in the service of the Venetian republic and had been employed as a spy in the war against the Turks in 1716. During the siege of Corfu he had sold information to both sides, and when caught by the Venetians he was sentenced to death, but it was commuted to life imprisonment.

The prison of the Piombi or the "Leads" was of quite a different character and was so called because it lay on the topmost story of the ducal palace immediately under the leaden roof. It consisted, as indeed may still be seen, of a series of small chambers with a roof so low that a man of six feet could not stand erect under the ceiling. They were not abundantly provided with light or air. Many were darkened by the overhanging eaves and massive projections in the architectural façade, and only a scant supply of air entered through the small windows in the neighbouring passages. Their worst feature was the extraordinary variations of temperature. In the summer, when the dog-day sun beat down pitilessly upon the leads, the heat was almost insupportable; in the winter, being unprovided with fireplaces and having no provision for artificial warmth, they were almost glacial. The disciplinary régime was a mixture of barbarous severity and

extreme neglect. Prisoners were only visited once daily by a gaoler who attended half a dozen cells, brought in food and, if necessary, arranged for a doctor's visit many hours after occasion arose. This single visit was made soon after sunrise, when the secretary to the inquisitor, who held all the keys, suffered them to go out of his own keeping for the brief space of an hour. At first, no books were issued except those of a dreary devotional description. All writing materials, pens, ink or paper were scrupulously forbidden. Imprisonment might be quite solitary till the loneliness long protracted grew all but maddening; the alternative was uncongenial companionship with some offensive and personally unclean creature from whom there was no escape day or night, a far greater hardship than unbroken solitude. What life really meant in the Piombi has been graphically recorded at first hand by one who endured it for a year or more, but, goaded to despair, dared all to escape from its intolerable evils.

The escape of Giovanni Casanova from under the Leads of the Grand Ducal Palace in 1756, as described by himself, exhibits a remarkable combination of patient ingenuity and the most determined courage. The incident deserves to be inserted here in some detail, and will serve to bring home to the reader some of the curious conditions of the inmates of gaols in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The story is to be found in his autobiography, a book of memoirs, the authenticity of which has been

seriously questioned, but his prison experiences bear the distinct impress of truth; he writes with a precision and particularity that must be wanting from any purely imaginative fiction. He must surely have acted personally in the events he describes; the difficulties he surmounted were real; the perils and adventures through which he passed successfully could never have been invented; all the incidents and episodes were solid, sober facts. In other respects these memoirs may appear shadowy and untrustworthy. Much of the matter seems too highly coloured and full of exaggeration. This prince of vauriens was no doubt a great liar. We can easily believe that he was constantly in luck's way, long able to keep his purse full by his winnings at the gaming table; but when he tells us how he rubbed elbows with the best in society, appeared at European courts, talked familiarly with crowned heads and received civilities and high consideration from princes and great personages, we are disposed to question his veracity. He was unquestionably a real personage and the hero of many stirring and surprising adventures, and in none does he show to so much advantage as in his escape from the prison of the Piombi. It is certain that at an early stage of his profligate and depraved career, he came under the grave displeasure of the authorities of his native Venice and was committed, arbitrarily, no doubt, but not altogether wrongly, to the tender mercies of the legal custodians of the Grand Ducal

Prison. His arrest put a summary check upon his vicious and dissolute proceedings, but it was not on account of his immorality that they laid hands upon him; his chief offence was that he was supposed to deal in magic and was in possession of certain forbidden books on the Black Art, containing the formulas and incantations to be used in raising evil spirits and communing with the devil.

Early one morning the chief agent of the Inquisitors of State, who was known as "Messier Grande," came to his lodgings with an escort of thirty soldiers and arrested him while he was in bed. While the police secured his papers and his compromising books, Casanova dressed himself leisurely; he shaved and combed his locks and put on his best clothes, a shirt of finest lace and a long coat of the best taffety, "just as if he was going to a wedding party," he explains. Then Messier Grande carried him off in a gondola to a place of security where he was locked up until the afternoon, when an order arrived to take him to prison. The police gondola followed a devious track through the smaller canals and at last reached the Grand Canal where it ran alongside the palace stairs. Here they landed and the prisoner was ushered into the presence of an official wearing a patrician's robe, who scanned him from head to foot and said briefly, "Take him and lock him up." This was the secretary of the inquisitors, who talked in Tuscan as if ashamed to use the Venetian dialect.

Casanova next gives us a glimpse of the interior of the prison: "Messier Grande now handed me over to the warder of the Piombi, who, with an enormous bunch of keys in his hand, led me up two small staircases into a gallery, to a locked door, through it into a second gallery, at the end of which we entered a dirty garret, badly lighted by a circular window high up. I thought this was my prison chamber, but I was mistaken, for at the end was another door double-lined with iron, perforated by a circular hole, and I was ordered to enter. For the moment I was otherwise engaged, curiously examining a strange machine strongly attached to the wall. It was an iron horseshoe an inch thick and five inches across the opening. 'Oh that,' explained the gaoler, 'you would like to know what that is? When their excellencies, the inquisitors, desire that any one should be strangled, he takes his seat on the stool below, and this machine is put round his neck, half of which it encircles. A silken cord, attached to a wheel, is placed round the other half and by turning a handle the silk is tightened until death ensues and the sufferer gives up his soul to God — for you will understand the priest is close at hand and never leaves him until all is over.' 'Ah,' I replied, 'and I presume it is your business to tighten the cord.' He would not condescend to answer but led me into my cell and left me asking whether I would like to order any food. 'I haven't thought of it yet,' I said lightly, and he

went away. I paid the penalty of thus showing temper, for he did not return till next day and I was left for twenty-four hours wholly without food."

The prisoner, after recovering a little from his despondency and despair, proceeded to examine his cage. He walked round it with bent head, for it was barely five and a half feet high, and Casanova was a tall man, of quite six feet. He found that the room was some twelve feet square, with an alcove on the fourth side for a bed which was absent, and there was no other furniture whatever. The one small window was closed with six iron bars and gave but little light for a solid block of stone — part of the architecture — lay more than half across, but there was enough light to show him numbers of rats running to and fro. He fell into a state of semi-coma, and passed several hours absorbed in gloomy reflections. Then suddenly he roused himself and displayed ungovernable fury. No one had come near him, he was suffering from intolerable thirst, and the slow hours dragged along without a sign of relief. He raged and stormed and uttered the most piercing cries but to no purpose, as they were not heard beyond his cell walls, and after an hour or more of vain appeals he threw himself exhausted and despairing on the floor, believing that the inhuman inquisitors meant to leave him there to die. What had he done? He taxed his brain seeking the reason for this abominable ill-usage and could find



none. He was willing to confess himself a libertine, a gambler, an overbold talker, with no thought but to enjoy life; but in all this there was nothing criminal, no offence against the state. At last nature came to his aid. Worn out by his fierce passion and the want of food and drink, utterly broken and exhausted, he fell into a sound sleep. His awakening was the more terrible. The great clock above his head, and so near that it seemed in his very room, clanged out midnight, and as he turned his hands touched another, icy cold and motionless. Feeling sure it must be that of some corpse, he again shouted aloud in uncontrollable terror. But it was his own hand; he had lain upon it in his heavy sleep and all feeling had left it. Gradually he recovered himself as the dawn broke gray and imperfect, and about eight o'clock came the welcome sound in the distance of jangling keys and bolts run back, and his gaoler appeared, who asked in brutal derision, "Have you had time to think of food yet? Hungry, eh?" Casanova disdained to complain and quietly called for a full meal. "All right, give me the money. Anything else? Don't you want a bed, a table, chair and so forth? If you fancy you are only here for one night, you are very much mistaken." The prisoner made out a list including papers and books, but was plainly told they were forbidden. Then the gaoler, whose name was Laurent, left him and presently returned with soup, a little meat and other necessaries.

Casanova's condition now was pitiable. He had no appetite and he spent the day in horrible discomfort; the sun as it rose to the meridian beat down fiercely on the leaden roof till the room was like an oven, and although he stripped naked the perspiration poured off him in a perfect stream. His sufferings from the heat abated as the evening drew on, but the night had its own terrors: the incessant striking of the clock, the hideous noise from the rats as they ranged to and fro was horrifying, and worse than all, he became the prey of innumerable fleas who fastened on him with inappeasable fury till their incessant attacks caused him painful spasms and poisoned all his blood. Not strangely, the confinement, with the mental and physical tortures endured, soon told upon the prisoner's health and he was attacked with a dangerous illness which presently yielded to medical treatment, for the authorities provided an excellent doctor, and thus Casanova's chief woes were those of weariness, heat and fleas. As the days went on and September passed, he was buoyed up with the hope of coming release, for on the first of October new inquisitors would enter upon office, and he felt sure they would set him free. He lay awake throughout the last night of September, counting the moments till daylight should bring his gaoler with the welcome intelligence on which he counted and which never arrived. Many weeks passed before he could bear up against this bitter disappointment, but his forti-

tude returned with a firm resolve to escape from durance even at the peril of his life.

The forces of nature seemed likely to intervene on his behalf. One morning the shock of an earthquake shook the ducal palace, an off-shoot, really, of that seismic disturbance which at this time destroyed Lisbon. Casanova was looking out from his garret window when he saw the massive stone architrave under the roof outside oscillate to and fro, and he realised then what had happened. Warders and soldiers rushed in terrified, but Casanova took a savage joy in the cataclysm in the vague hope that the solid building would totter to the ground and he would be cast out upon the Piazza of St. Mark a free man, or perish under the ruins. To the dismay of his keepers he raised his voice in impious prayer, "Another stroke, Great God, another and a stronger!" at which the others, believing he had gone mad, crossed themselves and fled.

Casanova philosophically tells us that the man possessed of one fixed aspiration will generally compass his end, however highly placed; he will achieve rank and fortune and a great position, if he keeps his mind steadily to his one idea. With him this idea was to escape, and he pondered over it incessantly, puzzling over the means by which he could attempt it. Certainly they did not lie ready to his hand. He saw a way, feasible enough, of getting out of his cell, but could not imagine how to procure the necessary tools. He was securely

lodged, alone and apart, absolutely cut off from outside and his fellow creatures, save his warder, who could only help him by braving terrible penalties. Armed sentries were posted in the corridors and at his door, whose vigilance he could hardly hope to elude and who would easily have overpowered him if he attacked them.

Yet the way of escape was possible through the floor of his chamber which, being perfectly familiar with the geography of the palace, he knew to be just above the hall of the inquisitors where they met for business in the evening after the Council of the Ten, of which they were members, had concluded their proceedings. If he could but break through the floor and lower himself into the great hall below when it was unoccupied, he might walk off by the grand staircase, that of the "Giants," which visitors to Venice may still admire. There was no difficulty about the exit, but how was he to reach it? We shall see presently how the pressure of his needs stimulated his active brain and sharpened his ingenious wits.

His mind was still labouring to find some solution of the problem when his ill-luck interposed and any action was postponed by the decision of the authorities to give him a cell-companion. The new secretary of the inquisitors had a special grudge against a prisoner just taken, and desired to confine him in the worst quarters possible. Casanova's cell enjoyed this evil reputation, and Laurent brought him

in with the air of one who is conferring a favour, although Casanova would have infinitely preferred to remain alone. The newcomer was in the depths of distress; he was a groom who had dared to fall in love with his master's daughter, and was miserably unhappy. This wretched creature, who wept unceasingly, shared Casanova's cell for nearly a month and was then removed to another prison, the Quatri, used by the inquisitors for commonplace offenders, whence after five years' incarceration, he was exiled to Cherigo for another ten years. Laurent explained that it was a privilege to be detained in the Piombi, which was reserved for prisoners of distinction, while the Quatri received ordinary criminals. After this experience, Casanova's privacy was again disturbed by the arrival of another companion. This second prisoner was a prosperous money lender who posed as a pauper and would not yield to the exactions attempted by the inquisitors. He was, no doubt, a dishonest person, over-reaching and greedy of gain, extraordinarily mean and avaricious; but not unwilling, when forced to it, to purchase his freedom.

Now Casanova's condition and circumstance were slightly improved. On New Year's Day, 1756, he was permitted to receive a present from his friend and patron, a noble patrician, by name Bragadino, whose life he had once saved and who in his gratitude treated him as an adopted son. The present was a fine silk dressing gown warmly lined with

fox skin and a bag made out of bear hide into which he could put his feet. These were welcome gifts, for the temperature had gone down below freezing point and it was as cold now in the Piombi in winter time as it had been insufferably hot in the past summer. A money allowance was also made him over and above the sum spent on his subsistence, and this further grant might be applied to the purchase of books. Another boon was conceded; that of permission to leave the cell and take exercise in the adjoining corridor, a privilege which led to important consequences. For now at last he laid his hands upon certain "unconsidered trifles" which were to prove of invaluable use in furthering his escape.

This corridor in which he took regular exercise was the receptacle for much old rubbish; several pieces of rickety furniture had been thrown here, a couple of *cassoni*, or great chests, and a quantity of ancient documents, the records of long forgotten criminal trials. From time to time he turned over this heap of nondescript articles, among which were a warming pan, fire-irons and a pair of old candlesticks, the discarded possessions, no doubt, of some distinguished predecessor to whose comfort and convenience they probably ministered. One other bit of treasure he also found and pounced upon eagerly for future use as a weapon of offence and defence, and yet more as a workman's tool. This was a straight piece of iron, a foot and a half in length and as thick as a man's thumb, no doubt a bolt or

bar that had been in the lock of a door. Pursuing his investigations, he came upon another article of possible value to him; a piece of black marble six inches long, three inches wide and one inch thick. He promptly took possession of both the bolt and the stone without precisely realising the purpose they would serve, and carried them cautiously to his cell where he hid them carefully away. On subsequent examination he saw plainly that the marble would serve as a whetstone, and that by rubbing it assiduously upon the crowbar, he could manufacture an eight-sided, sharp-edged instrument admirably adapted to help him in breaking prison.

Spurred on by his eagerness to provide himself with a weapon so formidable and so unexpectedly put within his reach, Casanova applied himself with unflinching diligence to his task. His difficulties were enormous; he worked in semi-darkness; he could only hold the whetstone in his left hand; he had no oil to assist the trituration; he could only use his own saliva, which left his throat as dry and rough as sandpaper. "I can hardly describe," he tells us, "the fatigue that possessed me and the acute pain I suffered in completing my laborious undertaking. It was worse torture than any contrived by the most cruel tyrants who have oppressed mankind. My right arm became so stiff that I could barely move it; the palm of my left hand, which held the stone, was one large sore from the blisters that formed and burst as I continued to work on

unflinchingly. But I was rewarded after a week of incessant toil by producing an octangular stylet, each side one and one-half inches in length, and the whole tapering into a fine sharp point." The weapon once manufactured, it was of paramount importance to conceal it, but after long consideration it was lodged safely, and as it proved, successfully, in his armchair underneath the seat.

All was now ready for the momentous operation, but it must be approached with extreme caution. It was possible, certain indeed, that by long and patient labour a practicable hole might be made in the floor, but how to guard against the discovery of the work while in progress? It would probably occupy a couple of months at least, and how were the soldiers who waited upon the prisoners to be prevented from sweeping the floor during this long period of time? Casanova at once invented a fictitious throat complaint and pretended that dust greatly irritated and aggravated the ill. Laurent, the warder, insisting upon cleanliness, suggested that the floor should still be swept but not until after it had been watered. Again Casanova objected, dreading some other disorder and justifying his complaint by spitting blood copiously which he had surreptitiously obtained from a pricked finger. The doctor was called in and took the prisoner's part, and the result was a peremptory order that the floor should not be touched again. Casanova had now a fair field, but it was winter time and day-



light hours were too few to allow of lengthened labour; indeed, the cell was dark for nineteen hours out of the twenty-four.

Again his marvellous ingenuity stood him in good stead. He set himself to contrive a lamp and made it out of the most unpromising materials. He appropriated a saucer in which they served him fried eggs, and he made a wick out of his cotton shirt. To strike a light, flint and steel were required; the first Laurent brought him in the shape of a stone to be steeped in vinegar and applied as a sovereign remedy for a raging toothache; the second he found in the steel buckle of his small clothes. For sulphur he had recourse to the friendly doctor who gave him some in a prescription, and last of all he found the tinder in the wadding which his tailor always sewed in under the arm-pits of his coat. Fresh and exasperating delay was caused by the arrival of another unwelcome companion, another Jew, a most irritating and disagreeable person, who made Casanova desperate, not only by checking the work which it would have been unsafe to prosecute before him, but by constantly interfering with his fellow prisoner's comfort in everything he did. Extremely fat and lazy, he spent three parts of the day in bed and was consequently unable to sleep at night. Once he ventured to rouse Casanova to talk to him and pass the time. Casanova was furiously angry. "Hateful villain," he cried, "Sleep is the sole boon a prisoner can enjoy because it brings him

forgetfulness. If ever you wake me again, I swear I will strangle you." It was well that the work at the floor had not been commenced before the Jew came in, for he would assuredly have betrayed Casanova, and as it was he absolutely refused to agree to the arrangement of not sweeping the floor. Fortunately, and to Casanova's immense relief, a fortnight after Easter this unaccommodating person was removed to the Quatri prison, where he spent a couple of years.

Casanova was at last free to commence work in earnest. The bed removed and the lamp lighted, the prisoner lay flat on the floor, crowbar in hand, and furnished with a napkin alongside in which to collect the fragments as they were chipped out. All these he flung next day behind the heap of rubbish in the outer gallery. Inch by inch Casanova cut through the massive planks and at the end of three weeks he had pierced a triple flooring. But now a serious obstacle interposed in the form of a layer of the little pieces of marble known in Venice as *terrazzo marmorino* — the ordinary pavement of rich men's houses — and the sharpened bolt would not make any impression on this material. This difficulty he overcame, however, by attacking the cement which joined the fragments together. Four days sufficed to tear up the pavement and reach another plank below, probably the last of its series. Meanwhile, time passed; a midsummer sun again poured down its scorching rays upon the leads dur-

ing the day, and by night the would-be prison breaker, half-choked with the accumulated heat, lay at work, his cherished lamp by his side, slowly gnawing through his cage with the busy crowbar. One day he had a terrible fright. In the middle of the afternoon he heard the grating of the bolt in the passage outside — an unusual sound at that hour of the day. He was taken by surprise, for he was at work under his bed with his lamp alight. Hastily throwing his crowbar into the hole in the floor, he blew out the lamp, crawled out and threw himself just as he was, naked, upon his bed only a second or two before Laurent appeared, ushering in a stranger who recoiled on the threshold, overcome by the heat of the room and the loathsome smell of the half-extinguished lamp. “Into what devilish place have you brought me?” he cried to his escort, “and who is this loathsome creature?” Laurent tried to reassure him, and took him out again, begging Casanova to put on some clothes. The newcomer, who promptly recognised him, proved to be a fresh cell-companion, a Venetian of rank, Count Fenarolo, who had offended against the strict etiquette that governed all dealings with foreign ambassadors and found himself committed to the Piombi. He was a gentleman and was pleased to find himself with Casanova, whom he knew personally and to whom he brought all the latest news from outside, particularly the gossip current as to the causes of Casanova’s imprisonment. One story was

that he had invented a new religion; another that he had induced a young patrician to turn atheist; a third that he had created a disturbance in the theatre by hissing the plays of a writer who had many powerful friends.

The count was very much in the way, but he behaved with great friendliness and generosity. He freely shared with his companion the rich and liberal fare sent in to him, and when he discovered the hole in the floor, promised to keep the secret inviolable; more, to assist the fugitive in making his escape by lowering him through the hole when completed and afterward pulling up the rope.

Eight days later the count was set at liberty, and by that time the last plank was perforated so that Casanova, on applying his eye to the first small hole made, saw plainly that his conjecture had been right and that he was looking down into the hall of the Council of Ten. But he found the passage was blocked by an intervening beam of the ceiling below, and he was obliged to enlarge the aperture to get beyond it. Everything at last was ready, it only remained to fix the day and hour of departure. He settled for the 27th of August, the eve of the Feast of St. Augustin, when there would be no council meeting and no one about. Carefully closing the aperture lest its existence might be betrayed, Casanova patiently awaited the supreme moment, but, unhappily, on the 25th he was overwhelmed by a crushing blow.

Laurent came to him at midday and bade him prepare for good news. "You are to come with me," he said. "Let me dress properly," cried Casanova, overjoyed, taking for granted that he was to be set free. "There is no need for that," replied the gaoler, "you are not going far, only to another chamber better and brighter than this, with two windows from which you can see half Venice, and in which you can stand upright."

The poor prisoner, astounded, sank fainting into a chair. "Give me vinegar to smell," he whispered almost inarticulately, "and beg the secretary to leave me where I am." At which Laurent laughed in scorn. "Have you gone mad? What! You refuse to move out of hell into paradise? Come, come, — orders must be obeyed. Get up, and I will help you with your books and belongings."

So the fruit of months of labour must be lost irretrievably and, worse than all, the hole in the floor must be discovered. Yet in the midst of all this misery and disappointment, one crumb of consolation remained — the crowbar, concealed in the armchair, went with him into his new quarters. There was a terrible uproar when the hole was laid bare, and much seeking and poking among mattresses and cushions, but the precious weapon escaped notice. Nevertheless, nothing could be done with it. The new cell which was deliciously cool and fresh, had clean walls which would show the

slightest scratch on the surface. Escape seemed farther off than ever.

One day Casanova asked the gaoler to buy him the works of Maffei; but as that worthy profited by any surplus of the daily allowance that might be in hand at the end of the month, Laurent was terribly averse to extraordinary expenses, and suggested that other people in the prison had books and that they might advantageously lend them to each other. A system of regular exchange now began, and a correspondence was started by means of the hollow backs of the vellum-bound books, which lay flat when the books were closed, but formed a kind of pocket when opened. Letters passed back and forth between the tenants of neighbouring cells. Casanova found that overhead were two occupants, one Father Balbi, a monk of noble Venetian family, and the other an aged man, Count Aschino of Udine. Casanova's pen was the long nail of his little finger trimmed to a point and dipped into mulberry juice; the fly leaves of the books themselves supplied the paper. The subject discussed was eternally the same, — that of their escape; but the mind of the reverend Father Balbi was more critical than inventive, and Casanova felt that they could not work again for awhile. Nevertheless, he informed the monk of the existence of his precious crowbar, and offered to convey it to him if he would consent to use it in making an opening through the ceiling of his own cell into the garret above and then cutting

His way through the floor to reach Casanova, who would answer for the rest of the operation. Certainly he had formed no high opinion of the discretion and skill of his new ally, but realised that he must work with such tools as he had at hand. Balbi's first step was to provide himself with a large number of pictures of saints to cover up and conceal the damaged ceiling and floor. The next difficulty was to pass the working tool safely from one cell to the other. The fur-lined dressing gown was first thought of as a vehicle, but was abandoned. At last, after severe cogitation, an astute plan was devised. Casanova begged the gaoler to buy him a new folio edition of the Vulgate, just published, and the volume was procured in the hopes that the crowbar might be concealed in the back of the binding. But it was two inches too long and the ends protruded!

Something else must be tried to remedy this obvious objection, and the fertile brain of the resolute adventurer was equal to the task. St. Michael's day was at hand, and Casanova proposed to celebrate it by offering a feast of macaroni and cheese to his fellow prisoners. Laurent brought a message to the effect that these neighbours were anxious for a sight of the great Bible. "Good," said Casanova, "I will send it to them with the macaroni; but bring me the biggest dish you have, for I like to do things well." The crowbar was then wrapped in paper and stowed in the back of the book, care

being taken that it should project only an inch on either side. One anxiety remained, — would the macaroni dish be big enough to hide the book on which it was to be placed? By great good fortune the dish was of enormous size. Casanova himself prepared the mess, seasoned it and filled the dish almost to overflowing with melted butter. Laurent grumbled at the brimming dish, but carried it — book, crowbar, macaroni and all — safely to Balbi.

The monk got to work at once and within a week broke a hole in the ceiling, groaning all the time at the severity of the labour; but, encouraged by his correspondent and partner, he took more kindly to his business as he went on. At last, at 10 A. M. on the 16th of October, a slight tapping overhead assured Casanova that the job was accomplished so far. He had now no doubt that with the help of his companion he could in three or four hours bore a hole in the roof of the ducal palace and obtain access to the leads. All was ready for the attempt when once more it was interrupted by the unwelcome appearance of a fresh cell-companion, the most offensive and unmanageable of any as yet inflicted upon him. He heard the bolts shot back outside in the early afternoon, and had barely time to warn Balbi above to desist from work and regain his own cell, before Laurent arrived with the new prisoner and began to apologise for the annoyance he must give Casanova in bringing such a creature into close association with him.



The newcomer was not of prepossessing appearance; a man of villainous looks, forty or fifty years of age, short and thin, badly dressed and wearing a round black wig; a low blackguard evidently, and the gaoler called him that to his face without making any visible impression. When the lock was turned on him, after expressing fulsome thanks for the promise made him that he should share Casanova's food, he took out a rosary and looked round for some sacred image before which he could tell his beads. "I was brought up a Christian and am always attentive to my religious duties," he whined, as he went through his prayers and was greatly relieved to find that his fellow prisoner was not a Jew. After devouring greedily all the food put before him, he explained that his calling was that of a barber and spy, and that he had discovered a conspiracy against the Republic, but his revelations were deemed insufficient and he had therefore been arrested. His name was Soradaci; he had a wife, the daughter of an ex-secretary to the Council, and he expected, as did all who came into the Piombi, to be released within a few days.

Casanova thoroughly despised and distrusted this wretch, but to try him entrusted him with a couple of letters he was to deliver when free, and he worded them carefully, drawing a fancy picture of his contentment and gratitude to the inquisitors who had taught him such a salutary lesson, for he knew that Soradaci would hand them the letters at the first

opportunity. Three days later Soradaci was taken before the tribunal and sought to curry favour with the inquisitors by at once betraying his comrade. It served him little for he was forthwith remanded to his cell, where he made a lying confession, and when searched the letters were found on his person and the discovery nearly cost him his life. Casanova feigned to be terribly upset, for he had sworn Soradaci to secrecy with the most frightful oaths and said that it was impossible to trust him. But the traitor was still there to be a witness to the approaching flight and he must be taken in another way, by playing on his gross superstition and abject cowardice. After solemnly declaring that by his treachery and the broken oath he had drawn down on himself the vengeance of the Holy Virgin, and that he must surely die in three days' time, Casanova pretended to have made intercession on his behalf and that pardon had been promised in a dream. The Virgin had appeared to him and said, "Soradaci is a devout worshipper of mine, and to reward you for your kindness to him I shall send an angel down to your prison during the next few days to reach you through the ceiling and take you out."

The appointment was fixed with Balbi to make his appearance at a certain hour, various rites were performed, ablutions with prayer and the sprinkling of the cell with holy water; the vigil was kept religiously, but it was clear that Soradaci, ut-

terly incredulous, thought the whole business the merest farce.

Suddenly, at the first stroke of the clock, Casanova cried, awestruck, "Kneel down, throw yourself on your face. Here comes the angel," as the monk Balbi, bearded and terrible, appeared at the opening in the wall. Soradaci fell forthwith into a paroxysm of terror; he wept and tore his hair and made humble obeisance. Balbi brought with him the crowbar and a pair of scissors with which Soradaci immediately trimmed the angel's overgrown beard and next used his skill as a barber upon Casanova. The preparations were nearly completed now, but the most important part was still to be performed, — the actual attempt to execute the escape.

Like a prudent general, Casanova proceeded to reconnoitre the whole of his ground, so as to judge for himself how far Balbi had done his work. Leaving the monk in charge of Soradaci, he passed through the hall and paid a first visit to the corpulent count in the adjoining cell. Their meeting was cordial and they discussed future plans pleasantly. Casanova proposed to climb up and pass through the roof above, to traverse the leads, and then find some way of descent. "I cannot go with you," sighed the count. "I am too heavy; I will remain here and pray for your success. Even you would be better off if you had wings." Casanova by no means despaired; he felt sure of being able to pene-

trate the roof, and returned to his cell to provide himself with other essential appliances. Four long hours were consumed in cutting up his bedclothes into strips and manufacturing a rope one hundred feet long, taking immense care with the knots, minutely examining each, for a man's life might hang by any one of them. By nightfall the hole in the roof was made. The woodwork had been split and splintered away, but the lifting of the riveted sheet of lead was a more serious affair. However, using their combined strength, Balbi and Casanova together managed to insert the crowbar between the gutter and the sheet above it, and putting their shoulders to it, rolled back and doubled up the sheet of lead till a sufficient opening was made.

Now a halt became necessary; it was a magnificent night, lighted by a resplendent crescent moon. Every one was certain to be abroad on the square of St. Mark and the shadows thrown on the roof by escaping prisoners could not fail to be observed. Nothing could be done till the moon sank below the horizon, after which there would be seven hours of darkness. The hours of waiting were spent in conversation and the count vainly endeavoured to dissuade his friends from their rash adventure. He harped upon the steep angle of the roof, the chances of being shot by the sentinels, the perilous descent with the agreeable prospect of being dashed to pieces. Although inwardly cursing the cowardice of his companions, Casanova concealed his wrath

and bent all his energies to extracting a loan from the count, whom he persuaded to part with two gold pieces — the whole capital of the forthcoming enterprise. About this time Soradaci fell on his knees and piteously begged to be left behind, the very thing that Casanova most earnestly desired.

At last the moon disappeared and it was possible to make a start. Casanova went first and quickly passed out on to the roof followed by the monk, while Soradaci closed the opening after him. The leaden sheets which covered the roof were slippery with dew and afforded no foothold on the terrible slope. Casanova knew that the slightest mistake would precipitate him into the canal and he knew also that the water was so shallow that he must certainly be dashed to pieces in the fall. Yet with undaunted courage he led the way in making the painful and dangerous ascent until at length both, with their packs on their backs, attained the summit of the ducal palace and sitting astride upon it looked around. The prospect was not encouraging; there seemed to be nothing for it but to drop into the canal; but suddenly quick-eyed Casanova espied a skylight. This skylight, as he cleverly reasoned, opened into some garret of the ducal palace whence a descent into the deserted official chambers of the republican government would be easy. The descent of the slippery roof towards the skylight was far more dangerous than the ascent; a single slip and Casanova must miss his mark and would be power-

less to save himself against the increasing force of gravity, ending in a terrible fall. A moment's hesitation and his mind was made up. It was now or never; do or die. Sliding down the slippery leads he brought up against the skylight safely in a space of time short enough, but which seemed an interminable age of acute agony. Balbi he had left on the ridge of the roof. To penetrate this skylight was no easy matter. It was securely barred over a window of small panes let into leaded squares. The crowbar was of no avail in removing the bars. What was to be done? Suddenly the happy idea came to Casanova to dislodge the whole skylight bodily, and with a very little labour he broke it away, giving ready access to the garret below.

Balbi must now be fetched, and Casanova crept back to him to be received with fierce reproaches at his supposed desertion. "I made sure you had fallen over," said the ill-conditioned monk, "and was wondering what would become of me. I meant to go back to the prison as soon as it was quite light. What have you been doing all this time?" Casanova told him to follow and he would see. When arrived at the skylight, Balbi begged to be lowered into the room first, leaving Casanova to get down as best he could, caring nothing whether or not he broke a limb. To descend unaided seemed impossible, but casting about Casanova found a small cupola under repair and near it a ladder to which he attached his rope and prepared to descend; but

in mortal terror that the ladder when released would fall into the canal and make a splash, he climbed down to the gutter, and at imminent risk of his life, forced up one end of the ladder under the skylight till it stuck fast for a moment and ultimately dropped into the garret where its end was received by Balbi.

Casanova now found himself with his companion in a garret-loft some thirty paces long by twenty broad. After a hurried inspection of the premises and running up against a couple of closed doors, further descent seemed hopeless, and now a sense of overpowering fatigue took possession of Casanova. He could not move hand or foot, but threw himself down on the floor with one of his bundles under his head and succumbed to sleep. The surrender was perfectly irresistible; had death been the penalty of giving way, he could not have kept awake, and the feeling of going off was delicious. He slept for three hours and a half, at the end of which Balbi indignantly shook him again into life to find his brain perfectly clear and his vigour completely restored. It was now about five o'clock in the morning. A glance around showed that this loft formed no part of the prison. There must be some way out. By forcing the lock of the door, they found their way into another chamber and passed through a gallery, that of the archives, down a little stone staircase, and entered a great hall which Casanova recognised as that of the grand-

ducal chancery. It was not easy to get out of this chancery; the locks would not yield, so an attack had to be made on one of the panels of the door. This occupied half an hour, and Casanova, after pushing his friend to the far side, forced his own way through, despite the jagged edges of the broken wooden panel, which punished him cruelly. With clothes torn to rags and blood streaming from numerous wounds on his hips and sides, he hurried on to find a fresh obstacle in a massive door which nothing less than artillery could beat down. Casanova was in despair and ready to throw up the sponge. "I've done my share. I leave the rest to Providence," he said resignedly. "We must wait till help comes." Meanwhile he bound up his wounds, staunched the blood and changed his clothes. He put on the famous taffety coat with silver lace, adjusted his hose over his bandaged legs, put on three shirts, all gorgeously trimmed with point lace, and then laughed heartily at the figure he cut in a summer ball dress on the morning of the 1st of November. The grand silk mantle he threw over Balbi's shoulders, telling him that he looked as if he had stolen it. Last of all, with his gold-laced hat on his head, he looked out of the window, an imprudence which might have spoiled all, but really helped them to get out. One or two early idlers observed the apparition and fetched the porter, under the impression that somebody had been locked into the ducal palace by mistake over night.



Casanova heard the rattle of keys and looking through a crack in the door saw a man alone, the porter, mounting the steps of the famous "Staircase of the Giants," so-called from the two splendid statues at the top. He heard, too, a key inserted in the lock, and stood with ready weapon, the crowbar, awaiting his deliverer. But there was no occasion for violence. The door opened widely; the sleepy fellow also opened his eyes and mouth in utter surprise, little guessing that he had narrowly escaped with his life, and the fugitives rushed past him, not appearing in too great a hurry, but moving quickly down the staircase. They passed out of the grand entrance of the palace, crossed the little square and stepped into a gondola. "I want to go to Fucino, call another oar," cried Casanova; and away they started. The custom house was soon left behind and the gondoliers with vigorous strokes neared the canal of the Giudecca. Half way along this canal, Casanova casually enquired:—

"Shall we be soon at Mestri?"

"But, signor, you told me to go to Fucino."

"You are mad. I told you Mestri."

The second rower also insisted upon Fucino, and, to the rage of Casanova, Balbi sided with the men. Casanova, feeling as if he would like to massacre his companion, burst into a fit of laughter, admitted that perhaps he did say Fucino, but he meant Mestri all the same. The gondoliers, nothing loath, agreed, and offered to take them to England if they wished.

Enjoying the morning air with a zest he had never hitherto experienced, Casanova soon reached Mestri, landed and was faced with a new trouble. Balbi wandered off on his own devices and much time was wasted in hunting him up; then Casanova met a native of Mestri, one Tomasi, and was immediately recognised. "What, you here — Have you escaped? How did you manage it?" asked Tomasi. "No, I have just been released," replied Casanova with a sinking heart. "That is quite impossible," Tomasi said. "Last night I was at your friend Grimani's house. I should certainly have heard of it."

Casanova shuddered. This Tomasi would certainly give the alarm, the place was full of *sbirri*, and arrest was imminent. Only determined measures would serve. "Come with me," he said, seizing him by the collar and truculently exposing the crowbar. Tomasi, affrighted, shook himself free, took a flying leap across a ditch and ran for his life. But when at a safe distance, he turned and kissed his hand as though he wished Casanova well.

It was of vital importance to get forward. A post chaise took the fugitives as far as Treviso, but was then dismissed as it was too expensive a way of travelling, and they went on afoot. After four hours' walking Casanova was in a deplorable condition; his boots torn to bits, his ankles swollen; and he lay down, utterly exhausted, to hold discourse with his companion.

“We must separate here,” he said to the monk. “Our point is Valstagna beyond the frontier, but we must reach it by different ways. You shall go by the easiest; take all the cash and go by the woods, and I will take the mountain road. You will reach there to-morrow evening; I shall be twenty-four hours later. Wait for me in the first tavern on the left hand side of the road. Go. To-night I mean to have a good night’s rest in a bed, and I could not sleep soundly if you were anywhere within reach.”

Balbi’s reply was a flat refusal. He reminded his companion that he had promised never to separate from him. Whereupon Casanova with his crowbar proceeded to dig a hole by the roadside.

“It is your grave,” he said quietly. “I mean to bury you here dead or alive. I’ve done with you. But you may run away if you like, I shall not follow you.” Speech and manner were convincing. The monk thought it best to accept the proposal and took himself off.

Casanova, overjoyed at being alone, trudged on into the next village, Valdobbiadene by name, and here he made cautious inquiries as to the names of residents and the houses they occupied. One of the most important pointed out to him was that of the chief of police of the district, and to this with rare effrontery he at once proceeded. Some secret voice told him that he would run no danger, and on knocking at the door he heard that the man he had

so much reason to dread was absent for some days. "He is helping in the search for two notorious prisoners," said the wife who answered. "They have just escaped from the Piombi; one is called Casanova." "Dear me, I am sorry not to find him, I am his old friend and comrade. I have come a long distance from hunting in the mountains (in silk stockings and a coat of taffety!); will you give me shelter for the night?" The warmest welcome was accorded him; he was given a good supper, his sore feet were dressed, and he slept all round the clock in a luxurious bed, and waking refreshed and restored, went on his way rejoicing. This was not the only good luck of the sort that fell to him by the way. He found food and lodging in another hospitable house, the master of which was absent, and ran into one or two people who knew him but did not interfere with him.

One last escapade must be told exhibiting his bold and desperate temper. Reaching the house of a friend of his, he entered and claimed assistance, offering to give him a draft on Signor Bragadino as security for a loan of sixty sequins. The recreant friend refused, fearing to offend the Council of Ten, and declined to give him even a glass of water. The man was under great obligations to Casanova, who fiercely resented this cruel treatment and at once adopted a menacing tone, crowbar in hand. The coward threw his keys on the table and bade Casanova help himself from a drawer.

“I will take six sequins,” he said. “It is true I asked for sixty, but that was as a loan from a friend. Now let me go in peace, or I will come back and burn your house over your head.”

The rest of the journey to the frontier, which he reached safely, was made without contretemps. Sometimes Casanova walked, sometimes he rode a donkey; the last stage he travelled in a cart with a couple of horses. At Valstagna he found Balbi in the place indicated, and the monk frankly told him he never expected to see him again. Casanova would indeed have gladly separated from him there and then, for Balbi proved a drag on him for some time to come. In the end he was recommitted to prison, was released from his vows and died in Venice a pauper, debauched and dissolute to the last.

Casanova, having received a sum of money from his friends in Venice, passed on to Munich, where he obtained permission to reside until he went to Paris in the winter of 1757, where good luck befriended him and he became one of the directors of the national lottery; he made a large income and for a time was on the top of the wave. It is beyond the scope of this volume to follow him in his varied and adventurous career in which he so nearly secured a substantial fortune but constantly missed it from the want of the more sterling qualities of steadiness and honesty. He was always a frank Bohemian, a reckless gambler and unprinci-

pled roué and charlatan, imposing on the credulity of foolish ladies who believed him to be possessed of supernatural gifts and the secret of the "philosopher's stone." Bankers and great financiers befriended him and helped him to make large sums; but he wasted his capital in a foolish attempt at manufacturing printed silk at Lyons, which failed, and he was brought to the verge of ruin. He next wandered through Europe as a professional gambler, cutting a great figure in the best society at times, in which, however, he was laughed at and despised. He led a life of intrigue, fought duels, won much money, not always by fair means, and by degrees gained an evil reputation and the attentions of the police, who constantly warned him to "move on" from the capitals and great cities. Nothing prospered with him and in these days of decadence he made fresh acquaintance with the interior of prisons. When in London he was locked up in Newgate as the penalty of being engaged in a street brawl. In Madrid he was lodged in the prison of the Buen Petiro, and was afterward for a time in the citadel of Barcelona. When his fortunes were at the lowest ebb he obtained permission to return to Venice and lived in obscurity for a time in his native city; but again he visited Paris, where he made friends with Count Waldstein who offered him the hospitality of his castle at Dux in Bohemia. Here he was appointed librarian on a modest pittance and spent the last fourteen years of his life,

a broken miserable man, subjected, as he thought, to constant indignities and enduring all the pangs of exile from his native Venice, with no one to console him in his last hours.

## CHAPTER X

### THE VICARIA OF NAPLES

Prisons of the Two Sicilies—Castel Capuano called the Vicaria—Notorious reputation—Ill-treatment of political prisoners—British indignation—Mr. Gladstone's open letter to Lord Aberdeen—Reforms promised but not carried out—Prison at Palermo—Island prisons—Nisida—Description of convict life there—Interior of the prison—The Camorra—Its powerful influence in the prisons—Details of organisation—Vitality of Camorrists—Prominent members defy authority—Society makes its own laws and enforces them rigidly—Still in existence in the south and especially in the convict colonies.

THE most interesting, and undoubtedly the most cruel and oppressive prisons were those of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and one of the worst in Naples is described as typical of the rest—the infamous prison of the Castel Capuano, so called from the district in which it was situated, and also called the Vicaria, the name it bears to this day, derived from the viceroy who ruled in the days of the Spanish domination. This prison gained an unenviable reputation in the time of King Ferdinand II, when its horrible condition drew down upon it the unmeasured reproaches of Mr. William E. Gladstone. The Bourbon government, ever cruel and tyrannical, was indeed rousing the indignation of the civilised



world by its misusage of its political prisoners. Arbitrary arrests were made wholesale, trial was tardy, often there was no trial at all; conviction was obtained by perjury or conspiracy, and worse than all, the victims of these unworthy processes were thrown into the foulest dens or dungeons mostly unfit for human occupation.

In 1851 Mr. Gladstone, after a prolonged personal inquiry, addressed an open letter to the British premier, at that time Lord Aberdeen, in which he uttered his protest with indignant eloquence. He describes the prisons of Naples as being the extreme of filth and horror, and declares that in the Vicaria he saw the doctors, not going to the sick prisoners, but the sick prisoners, men almost with death upon their faces, toiling up-stairs to them, because the lower regions of such a place of darkness were too foul and loathsome to allow it to be expected that professional men should consent to earn bread by entering them. The diet consisted of black bread and soup, the first sound, but coarse to the last degree, the latter so nauseous that nothing but the extreme of hunger could overcome the repugnance of nature to it. The association was indiscriminate among a crowd of between three and four hundred murderers, thieves, all kinds of ordinary criminals, some condemned and some uncondemned, and the politically accused. They were a self-governed community, the main authority being that of the *camorristi*, the men of most celebrity

among them for audacious crime. Employment they had none. This swarm of human beings all slept in a low long vaulted room, having no light except from a single and very moderate sized grating at one end. The political prisoners, upon payment, had the privilege of a separate chamber, but there was no division between them.

These strictures were taken in very bad part by some Neapolitan writers, who retorted with bitter denials and countercharges, expatiating upon the imperfections of the British penal system which inflicted the horrible punishment of the lash and had no reason to be proud of its prisons. The attack made no great impression, for the humane and intelligent management of the British prisons was too well known, and corporal punishment, indefensible no doubt, was but rarely administered. A better argument by way of denying the charges was to point to another Neapolitan prison, that of San Francisco, with which no great fault could be found. Nothing could better its position; it was well lighted, well ventilated, and it was kept perfectly clean, — a statement presently contradicted by the amazing admission that the Neapolitans did not mind a little dirt.

Where so much diversity of opinion prevailed, more evidence of an independent kind must be brought to bear, and we may quote from another eye-witness who visited the Vicaria soon after Mr. Gladstone and whose account was strongly corrobo-

rative. This was written by another member of Parliament, Mr. Alexander Baillie-Cochrane, who was given full permission in 1851 to inspect the prisons of Naples, and published a book, "Young Italy," in which he relates:

"It is situated in the worst part of Naples, near the filthy, debauched quarter called the Porta Capuana. When we arrived there a sleety rain was falling and the outside, with its massive walls, triple bars and dirty aspect, conveyed most painful sensations of misery and wretchedness. From the upper stories, where the prisoners were confined for minor offences, they were leaning against the bars, their features distorted, indulging in foul and brutal observations. On entering we were met by the authorities, who at once proceeded to open those tiers of dungeons where, up to this time, no Englishman had ever penetrated. The large court into which we drove was surrounded by a portico, which must, at one time, have been handsome; but it all seemed to have caught the contagion of vice and infamy; it smelled of crime. The staircase was wide but reeking with dirt — a fitting approach to the apartments we were about to enter. At the top of the stairs a mob of tattered, decrepit, loathsome figures were collected; they were the relations of some of the prisoners, who were permitted to see them from time to time, and were admitted one by one through a small wicket, a man sitting at the desk and calling out their names; the man, wicket desk and all being

in momentary danger of being carried away, from the struggles of the mob. It was with difficulty that the officers cleared a way for us; but at last the huge bars were withdrawn and we entered the outer room, which was separated from the long gallery in which the prisoners were confined by iron gates, to which they all pressed with eager curiosity: some of them with a vicious expression of countenance which made me rather wish to remain on the outside of the bars. The officers, by driving the men back, were at last able to open the gates. We entered, and they were carefully locked and barred behind us. It was a gallery perhaps some two hundred feet long by twenty wide, with small rooms branching off it, and in this gallery from two hundred to three hundred were lodged. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the horrors of the place. A damp, fetid, noxious vapour filled every cell; many of the windows by which the light entered had no glass, and the wet mist penetrated through the close bars.

“ The mass of the prisoners were dressed in the most filthy rags and their features were fearfully degraded. But mingling with these were men of far different character and appearance. Hustled by the crowd of vagrants and scoundrels might be seen men who, at one time, swayed the destinies of the kingdom, and were honoured by the royal confidence. These men withdrew into their rooms where some ten or twelve slept together, and there they

told me the tales of their misery. Most of them, as at the Santa Maria, had been eight months in prison without the least appearance of trial; and some did not know of what they were accused. It was distressing beyond expression to see gentlemen of education compelled to mix with the refuse, the foul refuse of the galleys. As we moved from cell to cell the crowd moved on and pressed around us. They could not at all comprehend the cause of this sudden and unexpected visit. After we had walked down the whole length of the gallery, the officers inquired whether we wished to see the lower part of the prisons in which the worst description of offenders were confined. I thought it was almost impossible that anything could well be worse than what I had seen; but anxious to have a clear knowledge of the actual state of the prisons, I assented. When we approached the gates the people pressed on us so roughly that it was with great difficulty the officers could compel them to retire; and when they saw that we were going without giving them any hope that their condition would be ameliorated, their looks of regret and disappointment would have touched any heart. We passed again through the crowd waiting outside, and then went down a steep flight of filthy steps till we came to the lower range of the building which was below the level of the ground, where we had to pass through two or three gates before we entered the place where some four to five hundred were confined. A much greater

number of officers were here in attendance, as some of the prisoners were very dangerous.

“The moment the last gate was unbarred we found ourselves in a place which it would require the imagination of a Dante to paint. I could understand that if this had been visited first, I should have considered the upper floor a comfortable residence. Some were lying on the floor; others crowded together on the miserable truckle beds, howling and blaspheming and evidently always addressed and treated as brutes. Some had climbed up to the open bars and were jeering at the people in the street. It was vice in all its degradation and horror; human life in a living tomb assisting at the spectacle of its own decay, its own rottenness. The atmosphere was thick as a London fog from the horrible exhalations. The men here were wild to tell me their stories; some caught hold of my clothes, others scribbled their names on pieces of paper and thrust them into my hand, which they seized and covered with their pestilential kisses. I spoke to one old man who had been confined there twenty-five years — twenty-five years in such a place! — and he pretended, I know not with what truth, that to that day he had never been tried. I asked the officers if this was the case, but it was so long since his arrival that they could not give me any definite information. When the wretched beings were told that I could do nothing for them, their expressions of sorrow were loud and bitter.

I was not sorry when, after quite forcing a way through the crowd, we reached the gates and I heard the last bar drawn which shut the poor creatures out from all hope."

Before he left the prison, Mr. Baillie-Cochrane examined the registers and ascertained that there were 614 political prisoners in custody. What could he do for these poor sufferers for their conscience's sake? He made up his mind to approach the king himself and put before him the whole painful story. Ferdinand graciously received him and listened with great patience and concern. The Englishman spoke out fearlessly and urged the king to freely use the prerogative of pardon, and release all who had been imprisoned, often without the semblance of a trial and on the most unfounded accusations. The king was much impressed. "I am delighted to hear the truth," he said, "and very grateful to you for telling it. No one is more anxious than I am to do what is right. I have been shamefully traduced and calumniated, most unjustly so." The reader will not perhaps be inclined to absolve the despotic ruler who allows such things to be done. The wished-for result was hardly achieved. In a few days the political prisoners were separated from the general population of the Vicaria, and some few were set at liberty. "So far so good," was Mr. Cochrane's commentary, "but, to my very deep regret, I have heard that the political prisoners were sent to a much worse place, where

communication with their families was much more restricted, and that the few who were released were very unimportant people and who would under ordinary circumstances have gone out."

Let us follow some of those who went elsewhere. One of them, Baron Porcari, was committed to the island prison of Ischia and confined in a dungeon called the Maschio, a dungeon without light and four feet below the level of the sea. He was never allowed to quit it day or night and no one was permitted to visit him there except his wife, who could see him once a fortnight.

There were others who fared still worse: Carlo Poerio, the eminent Neapolitan whose name and fame are precious possessions in Naples, was imprisoned with sixteen others in another island prison, that of Nisida, and under the most deplorable conditions. All sixteen were crowded into a single room, thirteen feet by ten. "When the beds were let down at night there was no space between them; they (the prisoners) could only get out at the foot, and, being chained two and two, only in pairs. In this room they had to cook or prepare what was sent them by the kindness of their friends." The room on one side was below the overhanging ground and therefore reeked with dampness. There was only one window, too high to look through, unglazed and freely permitting unhealthful air to enter and at times the intense cold. The chains were very ponderous; every man wore



two sets, one of cross-irons fastened to each ankle and to a waist leather; the other, half a coupling chain, sixteen feet in length, carried jointly between the two prisoners. The weight of all these chains exceeded thirty pounds. They were never taken off, and the trousers were made to button all the way down the legs so that they must be put on over the irons. The use of double irons was not common to the Neapolitan gaols but they were especially introduced just before the arrival of the political prisoners. As a further refinement of cruelty, frequently the most opposite of individuals were chained together, a political prisoner, for instance, with the informer who had sent him to gaol, or with the lowest and most ferocious criminal.

The prisons of Sicily were equally disgraceful. At Palermo the inmates were herded like cattle, exposed to the sun in the open yards or buried in underground dungeons. These *dammusi* were sufficient to cause a shudder; excavated far out under the Porta Carbone, but so limited in size that a man could not stand erect or lie at full length on the only bed provided, of hard stone. Complete darkness, dripping damp, and vermin innumerable, make up the horrible picture, drawn by an Italian who afterward visited the prison, escorted by Professor Pasquale Pacini, who pointed out the *dammuso* he had himself occupied, and cut out the very iron ring to which he had been chained to carry away with him. In this prison there was a torture chamber in which

the nails and rings once used still remained. There were many such underground prisons on the mainland. I have myself seen those of the castle of St. Elmo at Naples, now thrown open and dismantled, but which are still very much like dry wells or the mouth of a coal mine, deep pits too dark and foul even for the reception of wild beasts. The male prison of Aversa was a by-word; at the gateway as late as 1830 it was the custom to hang iron baskets in which were kept the shrivelling heads of decapitated criminals. At the prison of Santa Maria, there were caverns hollowed out of the rock behind the criminal prison, the only admission to which was through an aperture like a window and inside which the unhappy occupant lay heaped up, hermetically sealed. The old fortress of the Castel dell' Ovo at Naples contained dungeons as bad as any of those just mentioned.

Italy has largely utilised the islands that surround her shores as prisons or penal colonies. Nisida just opposite Baïæ, established under the Bourbons, is one of these, and is typical of many. The building which, seen from a short distance, looks little bigger than a martello tower, crowns the summit of a sea-girt hill and is sufficiently commodious for five hundred inmates on the "congregate" or barrack-room system. Its situation is unrivalled, commanding as it does the Bay of Naples on one side, and that of Baïæ on the other, with Cape Misenum and the islands of Ischia and Procida beyond. Its lodgers

do not care as much for the view as for the privilege of purchasing wine, fruit or tobacco at the canteen; the means for which they can procure by their industry. The present writer when he visited it found all pretty busily employed; a large contingent on shoes and slippers; others were tailoring, weaving at quaint old-fashioned looms or spinning-wheels, and turning out an excellent cloth-like canvas. A few specially well-conducted convicts were employed beyond the walls in the gardens, olive grove and farm. Nisida is famous for its oil. Its lemons grow to a gigantic size; its cows give excellent milk which is churned into excellent butter. All these operations are entrusted to the prisoners. Over the outer gateway is an inscription, "*Sine Pecunia,*" purporting to explain that the prison was built at no cost, the expenses having been defrayed by the sale of rabbits with which the island was formerly over-run. They were caught in large quantities by the prisoners and their skins sold. Much of the farm work at one time was performed by the Abyssinian prisoners, who with their Prince Dejeac were here expiating a charge of conspiracy against the Italian government. They were very mild-eyed, harmless looking men — nearly all black Africans of the pure negro type — and they shrieked with delight at the coppers given them to spend for cigarettes. One of them, a convalescent in the hospital, attached exaggerated importance to our visit and plumped down on his knees with his

hands raised in supplication, hoping we would pardon him then and there.

The interior of the prison is like that of a castle or tower, a winding staircase giving upon rooms floor after floor, the windows of which look out on the sea. The centre is an open courtyard used for exercise, and I saw a large number there mingling freely and not walking round and round in Indian file. They were rather desperate looking men and would assuredly have satisfied Professor Lombroso as to their possessing the characteristics of the criminal type. All wore chains, leg irons hanging to a waist belt and a red uniform, somewhat startling to English eyes accustomed to connect that colour with an honourable profession or a royal livery, and not with crime. These chains at night are made fast to the foot of the bedstead. In cases of misconduct, when the prisoner is relegated to the punishment cell, this chain is attached to a ring in the cell wall, and its wearer can move only its length through the open cell door into the central court. But the prisoners were orderly and gave but little trouble, as I was told. Serious insubordination was very rare and escape from such a sea-girt fortress all but impossible. If a fugitive could elude the military sentries, there were the shark-haunted waters at the base of the rocks.

The prison was clean, — obviously it was often swept and garnished, — although fresh water is a scarce commodity in this elevated position and every

drop must be brought over from the mainland. There is the sea below available for scrubbing purposes, and all the stone floors and passages are washed daily — a very necessary operation in that climate. All the economic arrangements were of the simplest, most rough-and-ready character. The kitchen was a dark, dirty looking den; the soup of cabbage very poor and thin; the bread coarse and black; but the bedding was ample, the clothing good and the physical condition of the prisoners excellent. All utensils were of quaint shape; some coppers of classical form might have come straight from Pompeii. In the bakehouse the bread was being prepared in a primitive sort of trough, kneaded by a patient donkey in a roundabout, turning a wheel.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CAMORRA AND THE MAFIA

Origin of the Camorra—Its operation in the Vicaria of Naples—Diego Zezza Organisation of the Camorra—Its vocabulary—The leader Salvatore Crescenzo—Origin of the Mafia unknown—Operates in Sicily—A protective agency—The “high” and “low” Mafia—Palizzola—The “Black Hand” in the United States—Murder of Petrosino.

THE society of the Camorra is undoubtedly of considerable antiquity. It came to Naples from Spain in the days of the Spanish dominion and its etymology is thus explained. The word has been traced to the *chamarra* or “jacket” of untrimmed sheep’s skin so much worn by the Spanish peasant, and an early mention of the society is to be found in the novels of Cervantes. An organisation of the kind existed in Seville and raised funds by levying blackmail on all gaming houses and drinking shops. Sancho Panza in his government of Barataria is called upon to decide a case of extortion of this description.

We read that the system flourished in the Neapolitan prisons during the sixteenth century very much as in modern times. A Spanish viceroy,

Cardinal Grand Vela, writes: " We have learnt that in the prison of the Vicaria the inmates who are most masterful practise many extortions upon their weaker fellows, demanding subscriptions to keep the Madonna's lamp furnished with oil and imposing other taxes just as though they were the masters of the place."

A French writer, Marc Monnier, who knew Naples by heart, has gathered together much interesting information about the commanding influence of the Camorra in the Vicaria in the latter days of the Bourbon régime. He tells us that when a new arrival entered the Castel Capuano, or Vicaria prison, and passed under the grand entrance, he reached two separate doors, both leading into the interior, and after the usual ceremonies of reception he fell at once into the hands of the Camorra. Its representative came up with outstretched hand and made the stereotyped application, — money for oil to burn in the Madonna's lamp. This custom was universal; the lamps were to be met with everywhere, even in the lowest and vilest haunts. The sum raised in the Vicaria alone would have sufficed to illuminate the whole city, and it was, of course, only a pretext for innumerable arbitrary assessments. The prisoner was at the mercy of the Camorra, body and soul. He must buy permission to eat, or drink, or play cards, or smoke; the privilege of buying was taxed and also that of selling. He paid for justice; for the concession of rights

and privileges to which he was entitled or which he had fairly earned. The ill-advised person who refused to be thus blackmailed ran the risk of being beaten to death. Even the poorest submitted at the cost of their wages or their last copper.

The Camorra in the prisons arrogated to itself the authority to allow prisoners to carry knives or to withhold the permission. When any persons of rank and importance were received at the Vicaria, a leading Camorrist came to them and formally presented each new arrival with a stiletto with a low bow: "Will your excellency accept this? We authorise you to carry it." They were snobs, these Camorrists, and always paid their respects to persons of means, while they tyrannised only over the poor and needy. Some of the prisoners were poor indeed, and reduced to any shifts to obtain a little cash. There was a regular traffic in the food and clothes issued by the administration, which the indigent sold to the Camorrists and which the latter passed back at a price to the officials, thus making a profit out of the poor prisoners.

Although weapons were positively forbidden in the prison, the chief of the Camorra could always lay his hands upon knives, and had his own private store. It was the boast of the society that it maintained good order and gave protection to the well-disposed; that they acted as a sort of unofficial police, and if they levied blackmail, on the other hand, they prevented thefts; if they stabbed people



when it suited them, they would suffer no murderous affrays. Duels might be fought, but only under their auspices; they enforced obedience to rules of discipline when the wardens themselves failed to secure it. On one occasion, when a prisoner of fierce, insubordinate temper defied authority, the warden appealed to a Camorrist for assistance and was readily backed up by him. This Camorrist, named Diego Zezza, whose favourite weapon was a razor blade forced into a handle and with which he had once sliced off an enemy's head, seized the recalcitrant prisoner by the hair of his head and banged him against an iron gate until he cried for mercy. Diego Zezza came to a violent end. His overbearing ways were so resented by his comrades that a conspiracy was set on foot against him and he was assassinated by some of the most resolute of his own associates.

The Camorrist was obliged to maintain his authority if it was challenged. A priest from Calabria who had gotten into trouble and was sent to the Vicaria, was approached as usual for his contribution for oil, but being quite penniless could not pay. The Camorrist raised his stick threateningly — "You wouldn't dare to do that if I had a knife," said the priest. "You shall have one," replied the other, and two were forthwith produced. The chief of the Camorra had always a stock in hand in spite of all regulations to the contrary. In this case the priest, like all the Calabrians, was more

skilful than his adversary and speedily killed the Camorrist.

Among the perquisites of the Camorrists was the monopoly of gambling. A tax was levied upon every game of *morra* played, — a favourite amusement with all Neapolitans. It is simplicity itself; one player holds up his doubled fist and throws out one or more fingers and the other guesses the number as they are displayed. If one cries "five" and the number of fingers is three or four, the other player wins. In the prisons the stakes were measures of wine, also supplied by the Camorra, which in this way made money all round. The gains were very substantial when affairs prospered, and as much as £40 or £50 was paid into the society's treasury every week.

The organisation was extensive and all the prisons were brought into it. How well the system worked was to be seen in a correspondence between the chief Camorrist and one of his subordinate lieutenants in another prison which was shown to Mr. Marc Monnier. These letters, by many different hands, proving that the chief was no scholar and had to depend upon the literary skill of others, dealt largely with the affairs of the society, which issued orders, gave decisions, inflicted punishments, and divided its funds. All the current news was passed on, prison arrivals and departures, new sentences and terms expired. The most remarkable thing was the facility and regularity with which these clan-

destine letters were passed in and out of the prisons; no doubt the wardens were always at the service of the Camorrist and helped them in every way.

Discipline was strict in the ranks; submission and obedience were rigorously exacted; advancement was slow and painfully earned. The recruit passed a long novitiate. He began in the lowest grade, that of the *garzone chi mala vita*, "youth of vicious life," in which he was kicked about by his betters and did any kind of dirty work. Then he rose to be a *picciotto*, holding a certain position, but still an inferior. He might pass through years of diligent, even dangerous service, and if necessary be put to the severest trial, that of carrying out a murder at the command of the society, when some bloodthirsty vengeance was sought. If nothing of the kind pressed, it was at one time the rule to throw down a copper coin on the ground for the *picciotto* to pick up while his comrades stabbed at his fingers with the points of their knives. Promotion might be earned by some tremendous act of self-sacrifice, such as that of accepting the blame for a heinous crime committed by some one else. Cases have been known in which the innocent criminal received and endured a very long sentence, even ten or twenty years at the galleys, cheerfully, bearing the burden of another for the great reward of becoming a full member of the society. This probation might be greatly prolonged, but it was worth it to secure the coveted position of the Camorrist entitled to dictate

to others, to take his share of the spoils when divided, and to receive the adulation and cringing respect of the lower orders. He was after that eligible to become one of the supreme chiefs, a post of great consequence and of unlimited power. He became in the argot of the society a *masto* or a *capo-masto*; that is, "master" or "grand-master," — a personage who ruled over his fellows as a superior being. When an ordinary member met a *masto* on the street, he was bound to remove his hat and humbly ask for orders.

Every member was addressed as "*Si*," the abbreviation of *signore*. The Society had a rich vocabulary of slang terms. *Freddare* was "to kill"; *il dormenté* was "the dead man." A dagger, as in ancient days, was the *misericordi*; the *tit-tac* or *bobotta* was a revolver; the police were *lasagne*, so called after a kind of macaroni; *l'asparago* was a gendarme. The Camorristi were loyal to each other, and any treachery was punished with death. They quarrelled among themselves and were bound to fight with knives and to strike in the chest in serious cases. A Camorrist might cease active work but could never wholly withdraw from the society. They received help in old age; their widows were pensioned and their children provided for.

After the fall of the Bourbons and in the early days of the unification of Italy, when the new régime had not consolidated its power, the Camorra in Naples was more than ever formidable; they

controlled such forces and were so strongly bound together that the ordinary laws were of little avail against them. People were afraid to complain when they were robbed, and the police hesitated to pursue the robbers. If any were taken red-handed and the case was clear against them, the judges often dared not convict or sentence them. It was some time before the energetic measures taken by the government were of any avail, for even when numerous arrests had been made, there was a definite danger in collecting these terrible creatures in the same gaol. The leading Camorrist in those days were miscreants foremost in the committal of every kind of crime; they were thieves, brigands and murderers, and the careers of one or two of the worst may be quoted in support of this statement.

A prominent personage, leader and king, was Salvatore Crescenzo, who first entered the Vicaria in 1849, where he continued his violent misdeeds by wounding one fellow prisoner and killing another. After regaining his freedom in 1855, he returned to the active business of a Camorrist, was again captured and sent to gaol, but this time at a distance from Naples. After his next release, he took to politics and was for a time a member of the revolutionary police under Liborio Romano, but this was not in his line, and he again joined the Camorra and ended his life in the island of Ponza.

A long list might be made out of men of the same type.

It might be supposed that the baleful tyranny of the Camorra, which was an undoubted fact, based upon undeniable evidence, had now disappeared from the Italian prisons. Yet, according to the best authority, the society still flourishes in the south and especially in the convict colonies established in the various islands of the kingdom. A writer in the "Archivo di Psichiatria," Signor Pucci, states positively from his personal knowledge that the Camorra is still ferociously active. It is absolute master in every colony. Although by no means numerically strong, by its admirable and unscrupulous organisation it still rules despotically, despises laws and regulations and sets the authority of all prison officials at defiance. Brutal violence may not be often practised as of old, but the society still extorts blackmail from the rest of the colonists, adopting nefarious methods of obtaining money. One is by the tax on gambling — the Italian, bond or free, is always eager to gamble; another is by the most extortionate usury at twenty or thirty per cent.; a third is by forcibly impounding the earnings of those who work. When new arrivals appear in the colony, if they have money or decent clothes they are made drunk and then robbed. The first sight, says Signor Pucci, that strikes the visitor is that of a number of lazy, truculent ruffians lounging idly in the sun or strolling and loafing about the yards and passages. These are the Camorristi; they are too lazy to lift a finger to

shut a door; but on Sundays they appear in smart clothes, wearing watches and chains, the proceeds of their extortion. As these *coatti* "ex-convict colonists," are mostly criminal men, it is easy to understand how soon this corrupting association drags them down. The authorities are powerless to protect them or to control the infamous practices of the Camorra. This is alleged to be the cardinal defect of the colonies and those who know declare that wherever Italians of the dangerous class congregate together in their freedom, the Camorra will always exercise its baneful control.

The influence of this criminal society has extended to all classes, and especially has it made itself felt in the municipal life of Naples, which might well be termed rotten to the core. No determined effort to strike at this plague spot and eradicate this crying evil met with any success before the royal order for inquiry into the condition of municipal government was issued in 1900, when the most astonishing facts were brought to light.

The origin of the Mafia, which flourishes chiefly in Sicily is lost. Probably it arose centuries ago as a means of self-protection among the residents of that unhappy island which has been the pawn of so many rulers. Though little is definitely known of it, apparently the society is as powerful in the twentieth century as in the eighteenth or the nineteenth.

There seems to be no closely knit organisation

and yet it works with almost the precision of a machine. In the rural districts to some extent it takes the place of a police force in the protection of property. The small farmer makes a contribution to some one who is generally understood to be a leader and his crops are untouched. His neighbour neglects or refuses to do the same and his fields are plundered. Membership in the order is often tolerably well known, and thousands who are not actively engaged are in sympathy with the society and give information whenever desired. Garibaldi's easy success in Sicily is attributed to the good wishes of the Mafia.

The worst features appear in the cities. There the members are ready for plunder, personal mutilation, and even a murder may be purchased for a few dollars. The leaders are not elected. They rise by personal force — because they can make others follow them — and yet their authority is never questioned until a rival appears, and then death settles the leadership in favour of the stronger, and another unsolved murder is added to the long list of the police. In many cases the police themselves are in collusion with the *Mafiosi*, or at least do not make any determined effort to bring them to justice.

Some declare that there is a "high" as well as a "low" Mafia. To the former belong many men prominent in public life, who, while they may not themselves take part in actual criminal acts, are yet



able by their political influence to protect the ordinary members from the consequence of their deeds.

Count Codronchi, High Commissioner, and military commandant of the island in 1894, declares that the acknowledged leader of the society, Palizzola, Parliamentary deputy from Palermo, charged with the murder of Marquis Notarbartola, was thus shielded. It is certain that many obstacles were thrown in the way of the investigation, that Codronchi was transferred, and that Palizzola, after being convicted twice in Northern Italy, where the case had been moved, finally escaped on a technicality. Further he afterward received a decoration from the Prime Minister and is still influential in public life. In some respects his position seems analogous to that of the "boss" in an American city.

Nevertheless some members both of the Camorra and of the Mafia have been caught red-handed and have been punished, while others fled to escape arrest. Many of both classes have come to the United States along with the great stream of Italian immigration and the "Black Hand" outrages have followed. In nearly all cases only those of Italian birth have been involved, and generally the crimes have grown out of attempted blackmail.

A prosperous Italian receives a letter, signed with a picture of a black hand, demanding that a specified sum of money be left at a designated place, and threatening dire consequences for failure. Often the frightened recipient carries out the instructions

and does not even report the matter to the police. In case he refuses his horses may be poisoned, his child kidnapped, his place of business wrecked by explosives, or he may even be stabbed or shot, particularly if he has reported the letter to the police who have generally been unable to protect him.

Investigators generally do not believe that either the Camorra or the Mafia has been transplanted to America, unless perhaps some crimes in New Orleans, several years ago, may be attributed to the Mafia. It is believed that the crimes have been planned by individuals or by small groups, which may include, however, old members of one or the other of the societies abroad. Generally they are simply bold spirits, some of whom have lived in America almost since childhood, who hate honest work and prefer to live upon the ignorance and the fears of their countrymen.

New York, which contains an Italian population second only to Naples, has been the centre of these crimes, which the ordinary detective force seemed unable to solve. In 1905, a special bureau of Italian-speaking detectives under Lieutenant Joseph Petrosino, was established to deal with such cases and a long string of convictions followed. In addition about sixty men, some of whom were wanted by the Italian police, were deported, because of previous criminal records. Many crimes remained unpunished, however, because of the difficulty of getting testimony against suspected persons. The vic-

tims or their friends, either because of fear or because they preferred to take private vengeance, have hindered the police instead of helping them.

Lieutenant Petrosino soon became convinced that there was little hope of repressing the Italian criminal in New York without the coöperation of the Italian government. By exchange of records the police departments of the two countries would be enabled to exercise closer supervision of suspected individuals and could report suspicious cases. Without the criminal records kept abroad, the authorities in the United States were unable to deal promptly with the immigrants.

Armed with credentials from the New York City government and from the national government as well, Lieutenant Petrosino sailed for Europe in February, 1909. Though he travelled under an assumed name he was recognised in various cities by Italians who had spent some time in the United States, and probably knowledge of his presence was widespread among the criminal classes. Though several times warned of danger, he did not flinch, but went quietly on collecting material and striving to interest the authorities in his mission. While in Palermo, Sicily, on the night of March 12, 1909, he was twice shot in the Piazza Marina, just as he was mailing a letter to his wife, and died almost instantly. Though the police were ordered to be especially active months of investigation apparently have produced no results.

Speculation has connected the tragedy with the names of many well-known Italian criminals. Guiseppe Di Primo, whom Petrosino suspected of complicity in the celebrated "barrel murder" in 1903, and who was later deported through his efforts, is said to have threatened to take his life if opportunity offered. Errico Alfano, better known as Erricone, a Camorrist of Naples, who was deported and arrested in his native city, through information given by Petrosino, is also suspected. For that matter, any one of a hundred who had felt his heavy hand may have done, or, at least, have incited the crime.

Petrosino's work has been continued chiefly by men with whom he worked and whom he had trained. The "Black Hand" outrages have persisted and it becomes increasingly evident that they can be suppressed only by exercising closer scrutiny of the records of Italian immigrants, and perhaps also by adopting a system of espionage, heretofore entirely foreign to American ideas of the limits of police activity.







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